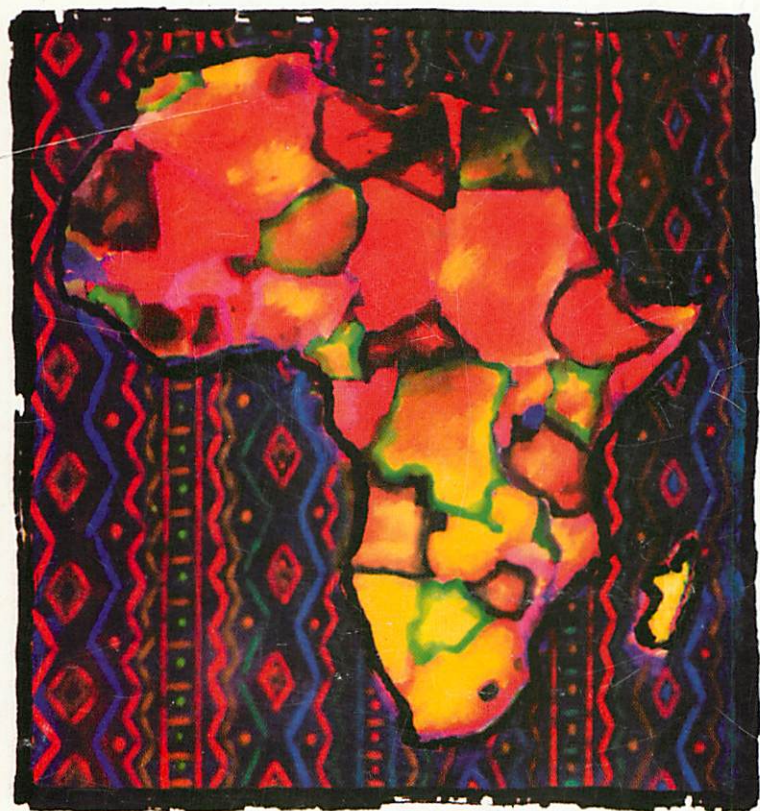


2000 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA



Edited by
Dr. Emory J. Tolbert

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

2000 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Edited by

Dr. Emory J. Tolbert
Department of History
Howard University

Copyright © 2005

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by The Sabbath In Africa Study Group

Dr. Harold L. Lee, Chair

Dr. Charles E. Bradford

Dr. Joan Francis

Dr. Bertram Melbourne

Dr. Douglas Morgan

Dr. Ganoune Diop

Dr. Keith Burton

Mr. Dwight Bradford

Dr. Emory J. Tolbert

Contents

Introduction	v
<i>Dr. Emory J. Tolbert</i>	
Acts 1:8: Where On Earth Is The End Of The Earth?	1
<i>Dr. Bertram Melbourne</i>	
Acts 1:8 and the Gospel In Africa	15
<i>Dr. Bertram Melbourne</i>	
The Search for African Roots and the Biblical Sabbath	29
<i>Dr. Emory J. Tolbert</i>	
The "Great Controversy" and the Coming of Global Christianity	46
<i>Dr. Douglas Morgan</i>	
Appendix	
A Wakeup Call.....	57
<i>Dr. Roy Adams</i>	
The Sabbath.....	60
<i>Ellen G. White</i>	
Endnotes.....	68

Introduction

by

*Dr. Emory J. Tolbert
Department of History
Howard University*

The publication of Dr. Charles E. Bradford's book, *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection*, has stimulated a considerable amount of discussion and scholarship on the place of Africa in Bible prophecy. His theme taken from Psalms 68:31, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God," has seldom been considered in the light of the events that foretell the Second Coming. This has been especially surprising given the familiar statements that the gospel would be preached "in all the world" or "to the ends of the earth" as the end of the age approached.

Dr. Bradford encouraged discussion and research by establishing a Sabbath in Africa Project, which has in turn held seminars on the topic. In 1991 he conceived this project with the stated purpose of "investigating and documenting historical and contemporary expressions of Sabbath consciousness on the African continent." The essays in this collection are an outcome of the work of one of the project's discussion/research committees. Dr. Harold L. Lee, President of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, served as chairman of the committee, which also included Dr. Charles E. Bradford, retired former President of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist; Dr. Joan Francis, Professor of History at Columbia Union College; Dr. Bertram Melbourne, Dean of the School of Divinity at Howard University; Dr. Douglas Morgan, Chairman of the Department of History at Columbia Union College; Dr. Ganoune

Diop of Oakwood College, Mr. Dwight Bradford of the Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church; Dr. Keith Burton of LifeHeritage; and Dr. Emory Tolbert, Chairman of the Department of History at Howard University. Serving as consultants were Dr. Nikolaus Satelmajer, Associate Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dr. Roy Branson of Columbia Union College, and Dr. Zdravko Plantak also of Columbia Union College. This committee presented papers in a seminar at Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist church in Washington, D.C., at the Ministers' and Workers Convocation at Oakwood College in 2002, and at the Allegheny East Seventh-day Adventist Conference Camp Meeting in 2003.

The first essay, "Where on Earth is the End of the Earth?," written by Dr. Bertram Melbourne, Dean of the School of Divinity at Howard University, examines the parting words of Jesus recorded in Acts 1: 8. Dr. Melbourne finds that although the Greek concept of the most distant place on earth was Ethiopia, the phrase refers to all peoples whether distant or near.

The second essay, "Acts 1:8 and the Gospel in Africa," also by Dr. Melbourne, examines the same text with reference to the history of the gospel in Africa. Here he reveals his findings regarding "traditional" African religious beliefs. He focuses especially on Christianity's long tradition in Africa beginning with Phillip and the Ethiopian official he baptized. At the end, he cites the remarkable statistics regarding the contemporary status and amazing growth of Christianity in Africa.

The third article, "The Search for African Roots and the Biblical Sabbath," is written by Dr. Emory Tolbert, Chairman of the Department of History at Howard University. He focuses first on the meaning of Ethiopia to African Americans and the African Diaspora. Ethiopia assumes great importance as a nation mentioned frequently in the Bible and as a reference point for people of African descent. For Seventh-day Adventists it is one of the most important examples of the survival of Sabbath-keeping during the years when it was under severe attack. Dr. Tolbert discusses the importance placed on the meaning of Ethiopia by some of the scholars of the Christian faith in the early church. He then synthesizes the findings of Bekele Heye regarding Ethiopia's struggle to maintain Sabbath keeping. In the end, Ethiopia's fight to remain true to scriptural teaching and independent of the Roman See are an important theme in the history of the Sabbath.

The fourth essay, "The 'Great Controversy' and the Coming of Global Christianity" is by Dr. Douglas Morgan, Chairman of the History Department at Columbia Union College. His theme involves the changes in the makeup of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since the days of the founders and its meaning for historians. Dr. Morgan tells us that the work of the historian demands a constant reexamination of the status of people and events, and that this is especially important in placing the growth of Adventism in Africa in context. In his conclusion, he emphasizes the need to interpret Christianity within a global framework.

These essays are only a part of the research that the Sabbath in Africa Project has generated. Additional works by Dr. Harold L. Lee of the Columbia Union Conference, Dr. Joan Frances of Columbia Union College, Dr. Ganoune Diop of Oakwood College, Dr. Keith Augustus Burton and others are also a part of the larger scholarly output.

The Importance of the Sabbath

In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in the Sabbath by Bible scholars. Among the many indications of this new awareness was the January 2005 issue of *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*. In an entire issue devoted to commentary on the Sabbath, scholars from Princeton, Duke and Union seminaries, among others, explored the origins of the Sabbath, the reasons for it, and its benefits in modern times. On the journal's cover is the statement:

In a 24/7 world, the Biblical practice of observing Sabbath is a counter-cultural demonstration of God's design for redeeming all of creation.

Does that idea sound familiar? It is not from a Seventh-day Adventist publication, and the scholars whose work filled the pages to follow were not Seventh-day Adventists. Yet the themes are all familiar to church members, and so are the themes in the articles. Here are examples from the January 2005 *Interpretation* introductory editorial:

Stephen Geller suggests that the story of the manna in the wilderness found in Exodus 16 preserves two distinct but compatible understandings

of the meaning of the Sabbath. A conventional understanding sees the Sabbath as a means of testing Israel's capacity to enter into a covenant relationship with God. Intertwined with this tradition Gellar finds a Priestly tradition that links the Sabbath with creation. ...

The development of the Sabbath understanding in the New Testament has important ethical and economic implications, Sharon Ringe points out in her essay. Arguing that Jesus and the early church assumed that Sabbath observance was a given, she shows how this was understood as good news especially for the poor and marginalized. In her view, "Sabbath holiness expresses both who God is and what God requires of God's people."

For Seventh-day Adventists this new interest in the Sabbath may be both comforting and discomfiting. The realization that much of what Adventists have believed and taught about the importance of the Sabbath has a new currency is encouraging. The fact that this interest is not necessarily associated with a belief in the *seventh-day* Sabbath may give pause. Concerns about blue laws and mandatory Sunday observance may increase in the light of such "Sabbath" discussions.

What is most important is the fact that the Sabbath is under discussion in many quarters, and that Seventh-day Adventists have a role in this dialogue. Dr. Charles E. Bradford's book has elicited a very enthusiastic response from seventh-day Sabbath keepers who are not Seventh-day Adventists. It has been reviewed in their publications and on their websites. For these sabbatarians, a new chapter has been added to their understanding of the history of Sabbath-keeping – an African chapter. In this way, *Sabbath Roots* has become a powerful witness. It has also become an important response to the widespread multi-denominational interest in the biblical Sabbath.

The essays in this collection highlight both Christianity and the Sabbath as they appear in the history of Africa. Both have undergone an astonishing resurgence on the African continent. These signs of the times merit our attention during this turbulent age.

This book also includes an appendix. The first essay in the appendix is a report by Dr. Roy Adams of the *Adventist Review* on a phenomenon called "Southern Christianity." The remarkable growth of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere has not escaped the notice of Christian scholars. Dr. Adams suggests that this trend presents a unique opportunity to Seventh-day Adventists, whose beliefs resonate with many in this burgeoning movement.

The last essay in the appendix is Ellen G. White's chapter on the Sabbath in *The Desire of Ages*. In this best-selling biography of Jesus, written many decades ago, Mrs. White reminds her readers of the origins and meaning of the Sabbath as set out in Scripture and applied in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Acts 1:8: Where on Earth Is the End of the Earth?

by

Dr. Bertram Melbourne
School of Divinity
Howard University

"... and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

How should Luke's presentation of these parting words of Jesus be understood? Are they merely a reporting of the historical facts or were they used with a specific purpose in mind? Did he intend them as a geographic itinerary of the gospel's progress and thus the theme of his document on the growth, development, and advance of the Christian faith? Or, did he see them as one theme among many? The crucial question concerns how the phrase *even unto the ends of the earth* should be understood. Where on earth is the end of the earth? Is it Ethiopia? Is it Rome? Or, is it some other place to which the gospel was taken?

Before pursuing this question, let us first look at the idea of "my witnesses" since our theme has to do with missions. Is this word "witness" significant in the passage? Wiersbe suggests that it is. He says "'Witness' is a key word in the Book of Acts and is used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun. A witness is somebody who tells what he has seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20)."¹ In an earlier work I indicated that in these contexts reference to seeing and hearing

indicate comprehension.² The disciples were thus being asked to share what they had comprehended of the mission of Jesus through their personal experiences. The intent seems to be that since Jesus was departing the earth, his disciples were to represent him by sharing with others what they had experienced. Theirs then was to be a significant and crucial role in the mission of the evolving church. This is in keeping with Jesus' own words in Luke 24:28 and with Peter's understanding of the characteristics that Judas' successor should have as outlined to those in the upper room and recorded in Acts 1:22. While the disciples' question to Jesus concerned the when of the restoration of the kingdom, his response focused not on that but on the task they had to perform prior to its arrival.

In a 1977 article, "To the end of the earth: Acts 1:8"³ T. C. G. Thornton argued that recent scholarship has rightly questioned readings making Rome the fulfillment of this phrase.⁴ For him W. C. van Unnik represents this trend since he believes that Jesus intended "the apostles to be his witnesses throughout the whole world to its most distant extremity . . .,"⁵ Despite the compatibility of this view with the Septuagint version of Isaiah,⁶ Thornton dismisses it since "the final part of the command or prophecy was not fulfilled speedily and effectively. At that time when Acts was written, there was much of the known world which had not apparently been evangelized by anybody, still less by the apostles or the first generation of Christians themselves."⁷

Yet, what should be the criteria for an adequate evaluation of the precise meaning of the phrase? Should it be speed of fulfillment and effectiveness; its contextual use; determination of how the author and original readers may have understood it; or the role the author assigned it in the plan of his work? Despite Thornton's objections, there is scope for investigation to ascertain whether Luke understood the statement as a pattern of development and evangelization and thus used it as an index of contents around which he organized his volume on the growth and development of the Christian Church.

In presenting his case against van Unnik's thesis, Thornton argues that the author of the Acts along with his readers may have seen "the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8 as representing the spread of Christ's gospel to the most distant part of the earth."⁸ He supports this notion in two ways. First, he presents a possible first-century concept

of Ethiopia as a large legendary place of indeterminate size. Second, he cites Homer and others like him who see the Ethiopians as the most distant of human beings.⁹

Thornton draws conclusions from this thesis.

1. Acts 8 was designed to exhibit fulfillment of Acts 1:8¹⁰ and thus the latter cannot be seen as a theme running through the work or binding it together.
2. This theme is only one among many relevant to the author's aims in the first eight chapters of the Acts.
3. Such an interpretation prevents us from being disappointed at the uncertain outcome of Paul's stay in Rome.
4. There is no need for the end of Acts to be seen as a climactic fulfillment of the command in Acts 1:8 since the end of the earth—Ethiopia—was reached since chapter 8.¹¹

Thornton's conclusions are debatable. First, it seems he may not have thoroughly checked the data before rejecting van Unnik's theory for their views may be closer than he supposed. Second, Acts 8 is not the only section demonstrating fulfillment of 1:8. Acts 8:1 initiates Luke's *complete discussion* of fulfillment of Acts 1:8 for he actually began hinting at its attainment in chapter two. Third, regarding the Eunuch's conversion as implying the movement of the gospel to the ends of the earth does not preclude Acts 1:8 from being the theme of the whole book. Four, Acts 1:8 is not a theme limited only to the first eight chapters. It is visible beyond Acts 8 in Paul's programmatic evangelization.¹² Five, the end of the earth is not limited to Ethiopia,¹³ or any one country for that matter,¹⁴ though Ethiopia must be seen as indeed part of the purview of the phrase. In fact, Thornton's own words, "We might then suppose that the writer of Acts intended to portray Jesus as commanding the apostles to be his witnesses throughout the whole world to its most distant extremity, using the same phrase ('to the end of the earth') ...," may indeed be correct. Unfortunately, he later repudiates it for another proposition.

"To the ends of the earth"

How then should we understand the phrase "to the ends of the earth?" Did Luke use it in an entirely Greek sense or from the Jewish perspective? Otherwise, did he unite both perspectives? What role does Acts 1:8 play in the scheme of Acts?

First, as Talbert points out, Acts 1:8 conforms to typical Mediterranean literary practice. Indeed, it was customary to have the plot of a narrative unfold as the fulfillment of prophecy.¹⁵ This is precisely what Luke does. Yet, speed of execution was not as important as ultimate fulfillment. That 1:8 was fulfilled and the how of that realization are features that are of greater importance. Moreover, the reference to speed of fulfillment demonstrates a misunderstanding of the very point Jesus made to his disciples and Luke highlights in Acts 1:6-8. The disciples wanted to know if he was about to restore the kingdom to Israel. Jesus said it was not for them to know “times and date” (NIV) belonging to the Father’s authority. As Pao points out, “In short, to speculate on times and dates is useless ... Verse 8 places the disciples’ question in proper perspective. The “restoration of the kingdom involves a worldwide mission.”¹⁶ They may have forgotten his words, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness and then shall the end come,” Matt 24:14.

Indeed, Thornton may be correct that Homer and those he influenced may have seen Ethiopians as the most distant peoples.¹⁷ Yet, he may have missed the point that in Classical Greek *eschatos* was “a superlative form derived from the prep. [sic] *ek* or *ech* “out of,” or “away from,” and originally designated the person or thing that was furthest outside.”¹⁸ Spatially it was used to designate the place furthest away.¹⁹ Also, the use of *eschatos* is affected by naturalistic Greek thinking which sees the “extreme” as representing the end of the earth.²⁰ Since *gē* is often used to indicate the inhabited globe,²¹ the phrase *heōs tou eschatou tēs gēs*, in Greek thinking, could indicate the extreme parts of the inhabited world. This notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that there are instances where the phrase is used with the simple meaning “everywhere.”²²

In rejecting the idea that the phrase means “throughout the whole world to its most distant extremity,”²³ Thornton notes that it occurs in the LXX of Isa 8:9; 48:20; 49:6; and 62:11.²⁴ Again, he may have rejected the thesis without carefully examining the evidence. First, the phrase also occurs in Deut 28:49 and Jer 6:22 with a slight variation since the preposition *apo* is used in place of *heōs*. This prepositional change affects only the direction of movement in the phrase and not its basic meaning.²⁵ In Deut 28:49, part of the curses in the blessing and curses of the book’s covenant structure,²⁶ Moses cautions Israel that one possible

outcome of covenant unfaithfulness could be defeat by nations "from the ends of the earth." Jeremiah 6:22 demonstrates the results of this prophesy. The prophet describes the consequences of Judah's lack of adherence to the terms of the covenant--the Babylonians would come "from the ends of the earth" to attack them.

What Babylon was to Jeremiah's day, Rome was to Luke's. Certainly Thornton would not argue that Jeremiah was wrong in regarding Babylon as the end of the earth since it was the superpower of that day? Jeremiah is employing Deuteronomic theology here. Is it at all possible that Luke could have done a similar thing? Couldn't he have been influenced by both the Greek and the Hebrew thinking? Yet, Thornton incorrectly states that no "Jew, Greek, or Roman around the first century ever conceived Rome as being at the end of the earth."²⁷ "Incorrectly," since the *Psalms of Solomon*, written between 125 B.C. and the early first century--employing the widest limits²⁸--refers to Rome utilizing the precise terminology *ap' eschatou tēs gēs*.²⁹ Thus, while Rome certainly cannot be regarded as the sole intent of the phrase, just as Ethiopia should not; it likewise must be seen as included in the phrase.

Second, the implications of Isa 8:9, 48:20, 49:6, and 62:11 are not the same, though all four passages contain the identical phrase as appears in Acts 1:8. In Isa 8:9, the phrase is employed in reference to "all distant lands" which are invited to witness the ultimate fate of the imperial power.³⁰ Isaiah 48:20 anticipates the return of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity. They are called upon to announce their departure with shouts of joy and to send the news of the Lord's redemption of his people "to the ends of the earth." It should not be overlooked that Acts 1:8 invites the disciples to make this same announcement. However, this release is of a greater liberation than that from the Babylonian captivity. It proclaims liberation from captivity to Satan and sin. Yet, the announcement is to be made to the self-same region--the ends of the earth.

The last two passages are set in the context of Messianic Jerusalem as the center from which the gospel is proclaimed "to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49:6 notes that Israel is the servant of the Lord whom God promises to make "the light for the Gentiles" who would take his salvation "to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 62:11 says God made proclamation "to the ends of the earth" that the Savior comes bearing reward and recompense. In this passage, the phrase seems inclusive

and appears to include both surrounding nations and remote or distant lands. Thus, the conclusion is apparent. Even in Jewish usage the phrase is not limited in meaning. It can refer to Assyria, Babylon, and Rome (not remote countries), surrounding nations, and distant lands.

The preceding examination suggests that neither the Greek nor the Jewish view of the phrase would be incompatible in the context of Acts 1:8. The two views, as previously noted, are not mutually exclusive. From the Greek perspective, the phrase would imply that the disciples should preach the gospel even to the extreme or rural parts of the inhabited world. In the Jewish sense, the phrase would signify that the disciples should preach the gospel to surrounding nations but not to the exclusion of distant lands. In sum, the implication is that the gospel should be preached everywhere. Apparently, Thornton used the Greek evidence from a particularistic perspective to the exclusion of the Jewish. For him, the author of the Acts may have intended his readers to see Ethiopia as the most remote part of the earth and Acts 8 as the fulfillment of the prophecy of 1:8. The facts are not entirely on his side, however.

The argument of this article is that Luke may have understood the phrase from both outlooks. The gospel was to be preached to the whole world including the most distant lands, as van Unnik proposes. Luke outlined his material to demonstrate its fulfillment. Rather than using Acts 8 as *the* fulfillment of 1:8, as Thornton suggests, Luke may have designed it to initiate the delineation of the complete fulfillment of Jesus' command and the outlining of the programmatic pattern of fulfillment. However, can the actual evidence in the book of Acts support this notion?

The Evidence from the Book of Acts

At his departure, Jesus commanded his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were imbued with power from on high.³¹ The Jews regarded Jerusalem as the center of the earth and its religious capital. It was also the city from which Isaiah had said the law and the word of the Lord would go forth (2:4). Obedience to this command resulted in the constituting of the Church, at Pentecost, in the presence of representatives from the ends of the earth.³² While Luke does not employ the technical phraseology *heōs tou eschatou tēs gēs* in Acts 2, his intention to illustrate that representatives from near as well as from

distant parts of the globe witnessed the event is unmistakable. It is evidenced in the countries and languages listed as being present at the event. Perhaps he intended to demonstrate that the cosmopolitan nature of the audience would positively influence the fulfillment of Acts 1:8.³³

At any rate, the first seven chapters of Acts deal exclusively with the activities of the Jerusalem Church.³⁴ Though it was growing and becoming settled, it was not reaching out beyond the borders of Jerusalem. Its leaders were apparently content with being a new movement within Judaism and had evidently forgotten Jesus' commission to take the gospel to "Samaria and on to the uttermost part of the earth." It was the Hellenistic Jewish Christian, Stephen, who first understood the meaning of the death of Jesus for the temple and for Christians.³⁵ He proclaimed the word with power. The authority's response to his understanding of the gospel resulted in its extension beyond Jerusalem, according to Luke's programmed pattern of expansion. The leaders martyred Stephen and began a repressive campaign, led by Saul of Tarsus, against the Hellenistic Jewish Christians.³⁶ This campaign resulted in the spread of the gospel to Judea and Samaria.³⁷

It is here that the import of Acts 8 in Luke's schema becomes evident. In v. 1, he notes that it was persecution against the church at Jerusalem, with the exception of the apostles, that drove the brethren out of their comfort zone and into the fulfillment of Jesus' commission of Acts 1:8. He also notes that the brethren "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria."³⁸ Moreover, Luke notes that the persecution of Saul of Tarsus neither intimidated nor silenced those who were scattered abroad. Instead, they "went from place to place proclaiming the word."³⁹ Luke implies here that the scattered ones went from place to place in Judea and Samaria proclaiming the good news that had been entrusted to them to share with others. How sad that their obedience had to come under forced circumstances rather voluntarily!

In the rest of the chapter, Luke cites two illustrations of what he meant by the statement that those who were scattered went from place to place proclaiming the word.⁴⁰ First, he shows how Philip went down to Samaria to work among the Samaritans (8:4-25). He even notes their full comprehension by citing the influence of what they saw

and heard.⁴¹ He shows how the success of Philip's work among these ritually unclean people, from a Jewish perspective, elicited the sending of a delegation from Jerusalem through whose instrumentality the Holy Spirit fell upon them.⁴² Thus, through this experience, the fulfillment of Jesus' command continues. Kee notes, "The movement of the gospel from Judea and Samaria predicted in Acts 1:8 is in process, and has now received apostolic approval."⁴³

Luke's second example illustrates how the Lord used Philip as the instrument to convert an Ethiopian Eunuch. Neyrey refers to him as a "foreigner with a bodily defect"⁴⁴ who was converted. He designates him as such assuming that he was a eunuch in the traditional understanding of the term and therefore under Jewish scruples would indeed be viewed by his bodily defect. However, Luke gives some clues to understanding. Indeed, if he were a traditional eunuch he could not have been coming from worship in Jerusalem especially at a time when it might have been the Passover or another pilgrim feast. His bodily defect would have excluded him.⁴⁵ That he was coming from worship and was reading the *Tanak* are significant. It means he was clean enough to worship in Jerusalem and to handle the *Tanak*. Luke T. Johnson cites ancient sources to bolster his position that Luke intended for us to see "this man as sexually mutilated which can also be detected by Luke's vocabulary choice."⁴⁶ He also alludes to evidence proving that eunuchs held positions of responsibility in ancient societies and were valued for their trustworthiness. Henry Cadbury concurs with this latter position. However, he cites linguistic evidence to suggest that Luke may have had an officer in mind rather than an actual eunuch.⁴⁷ John B. Polhill agrees here holding that whether or not he was a physical eunuch is uncertain. He concedes that the practice of placing eunuch in responsible financial positions became so widespread that eventually "the term 'eunuch' became a synonym for 'treasurer' and did not necessarily imply that the one bearing the title was castrated."⁴⁸ Felder holds the position those centuries before the first century AD the term eunuch had become a title designating a member of the royal court.⁴⁹ Schneider suggests that the term was often used "for high military and political officials; it does not have to imply emasculation."⁵⁰

That the eunuch was riding a chariot supports the argument that he was a well to do government official known by his office. Moreover,

he owned an Isaiah scroll which is not an insignificant fact. Thus, he should be seen not as a person with a defect but for his position of responsibility in the court of the queen. He certainly is one who would take the gospel to his distant part of the earth and doubtlessly disseminate it with confidence and credulity.

Luke's interest in this story is unmistakable. He consistently pays attention to those on the margins both in his gospel and here in the Acts.⁵¹ That he understood this story as a mission to Black Africa and the sons of Ham is undeniable. Scott contends that his readers would have understood him as making this reference since "Ethiopia is the Greek name for the territory of Cush the first son of Ham (cf. Gen 10: 6, 7)." In the Septuagint, the inhabitants of Cush are usually rendered by *Aithiopes* ... Cushite was widely used, even in NT times, to refer to Ethiopians."⁵² Felder notes that this is the longest passage in the New Testament that explicitly and unambiguously deals with black Africa in relation to the Holy Land in the New Testament.⁵³ Kee references "the ethnic origin of the Ethiopian."⁵⁴ What Kee implies, Polhill spells out. He says Ethiopia here indicates the ancient kingdom of Meroe found between the first and sixth cataracts of the Nile, "referred to in the Old Testament as the Kingdom of Cush, its population consisted of blacks."⁵⁵

The point here is that with this story Luke highlights the inclusion of Blacks not just in the spread of the gospel but in its advance to the ends of the earth. Also, the presence of a variant reading of this passage suggesting that the Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch must not be ignored.⁵⁶ It indicates that some sector of the church saw parallels between what happened here, and what happened at Pentecost, in Samaria and at Cornelius' house. If this reading correctly represents the facts then it could signify the Black Pentecost and would parallel that in the house of Cornelius which is often viewed as the Gentile Pentecost.

Luke notes that after his baptism, the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing—presumably to his end of the earth.⁵⁷ Hengel follows a similar line stating that, "... what is reported in Acts 8 is of decisive significance for Luke himself, because here the commission presented by the risen Jesus in Acts 1.8 is being fulfilled. As a result of the expulsion of the 'Hellenists' from Jerusalem, the gospel was passed on to Samaria and finally in the figure of the Ethiopian on his way home, reached 'the ends of the earth.'⁵⁸ I agree with Hengel's "is being fulfilled" for Acts 8

is not the only place where this fulfillment takes place.

In chapter 9, Luke records the conversion of another person who would be instrumental in taking the gospel to the distant parts of the earth. He tells of "the transformation of Saul from persecutor to apostle"⁵⁹ through an encounter with the Risen Lord and of his resultant surrender and commissioning (see vss 5-6, 15-16). Verse 15 is significant. At Ananias' reluctance to go to minister to the newly humbled Paul because of his reputation, God tells him, "'go for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles (the nations⁶⁰) and kings and before the people of Israel.'"⁶¹ Luke's presentation of the preaching of Saul in Damascus might not be insignificant. Damascus is in Syria and therefore not included in Judea and Samaria. He could have been indicating that Saul began fulfilling the command of Acts 1:8 soon after his conversion when he preached the gospel in a surrounding nation—Syria.

Up to this juncture the spread of the gospel had been among Jews.⁶² Before giving the spread of the gospel to other distant lands, Luke updates his readers on its progress in Judea. He shows how the Spirit led Peter from there for the conversion of a Gentile whose admission to fellowship was to have profound effect on the composition of the church. Kee notes that the next major step in the spread of the gospel was signaled by Peter's proclamation to Gentiles.⁶³ The conversion of this commissioned Roman officer had significance for Luke from several perspectives. It apparently signified the Gentile Pentecost and marked the conversion of one whose relocation, through imperial commission, could be instrumental in the spread of the gospel to distant parts of the inhabited world and to all of God's children.

In Acts 11:19, Luke notes the progress of the gospel through the entire world. As a result of the persecution recorded in 8:1 the gospel was taken to Jews in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. This means the gospel was going everywhere. He notes that some Cyprian and Cyrinian Christians preached to Gentiles in Antioch with such great success that Saul had to be brought from Tarsus to assist them in the Gentile mission. Kee notes, "The observation concerning the flourishing and growth of 'the word of God' carries forward the earlier reports as to how the message about Jesus has continued to reach farther and farther into the Roman world, starting in Jerusalem through the original apostles (6:2) and the 'seven' (6:7), advancing to

Samaria (8:14), to Gentiles (11:1), to Asia Minor (13:5, 7), and to Europe (17:13, 18:11).⁶⁴ Indeed Luke is correct that “the hand of the Lord” was with them. This means the presence of the divine power was there to validate their testimony.

As the work grew, the spirit of mission developed and the Holy Spirit directed in the appointing of Saul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to distant lands. Confirmation for this reading of the facts can be had from Acts 13:47 where, according to Luke, Paul tells the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia: “For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth’” (NIV).

Scott observes that Paul’s mission following his conversion is expressly concerned with the bringing of salvation “to the ends of the earth,”⁶⁵ Acts 13:47. He notes the geographic spread of the gospel through the instrumentality of Paul and Barnabas and contends that it echoes “the prediction and precise wording of the risen Jesus, according to Acts 1:8.”⁶⁶ Polhill views Acts 13:47 as “programmatic for Paul’s mission in Acts establishing a pattern that would appear again and again.”⁶⁷ Considering that this verse is reflective of Acts 1:8 as he himself admits,⁶⁸ then to that extent it is both a fulfillment and an illustration of it. Paul did take this task seriously and successfully took the gospel to scores of distant cities in the then inhabited world. Luke uses the last sixteen chapters of his work to describe Paul’s activities and his mission to distant cities in Asia Minor and Europe.

Why did Luke Climax His Work in Rome?

One final issue is yet to be resolved. Why did Luke climax his work in Rome? Did he intend it to be the “end of the earth?”⁶⁹ It should be noted that while Luke climaxes with Paul in Rome, he does not say Paul took the gospel there. This is not an insignificant point. A number of facts are evident, however, from what is known.

First, the journey motif is a featured emphasis in both volumes of Luke’s history of Christian origins, growth, and development. In his first volume—the gospel of Luke—the journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem is featured from 9:51-19:27. As a matter of fact, it is on this journey that the disciples are trained for gentile missions as they are sent out to prepare for his advance; sent on missionary tours to cities he would later visit (9:51-10:24); and prepared for the passion events

that would occur in Jerusalem. We could therefore say that the main feature of the first volume is the journey of the gospel to Jerusalem and the events surrounding its arrival there.

Luke's second volume features many journeys. Its first half shows Philip and Peter journeying to spread the gospel in Samaria, Gaza, Lydda, and Caesarea. The Ethiopian Eunuch's journey to his end of the earth with the gospel is implied. Luke shows how Saul, on a journey to Damascus to persecute Christians, is confronted and converted by the Resurrected Lord. It is his journeys that occupy the second half of this second volume of Christian origins. It seems that while the arrival of the gospel in Jerusalem was the feature of the first volume, its departure from Jerusalem is the mark of the second. But the question still remains, why did Luke climax the Acts with the arrival of Paul in Rome? Are there any parallels between Jerusalem and Rome?

From the writings of Paul, the hero of the second half of the Acts, we can detect his passion to preach in Rome.⁷⁰ The fact is that not even imprisonment could deter him from this mission. If Luke was indeed one of his companions, and we believe he was, then he was aware of this passion. Yet, for Paul going to Rome with the gospel had become more than a passion. It was a mandate for during his imprisonment in Caesarea God had promised him, "Take heart! For as you have borne witness in Jerusalem, just so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome."⁷¹ This necessity here is expressed by *dei* which connotes a divine necessity or the necessity of the eschatological event.⁷² Yet, why was it Paul's passion to preach the gospel in Rome and why was it a divine necessity?

Now, no one would gainsay the notion that Rome was the super power of the first century. As such, its capital city would be regarded as the political capital of the world. Again, it is known that Jerusalem was regarded, especially by Jews, as the religious capital of the world and its center. Knowing this passion and the divine necessity under which Paul operated, could Luke have climaxed his work in Rome to demonstrate that Paul achieved that goal while at the same time demonstrating the fulfillment of Acts 1:8?

It is my submission that Luke traced the spread of Christianity from the religious capital of the world, Jerusalem, through distant cities in Asia Minor and Europe to the political capital of the world, Rome. Moreover, Paul regarded himself as the apostle to the Gentiles

(see Gal 2:1-2, 6-8; Rom 1:5, 13-15; 11:13; 15:16-19; 16:26). He had a passion for their evangelization. While Peter claimed responsibility for the initiation of the Christian Gentile initiative, it was Paul who was foremost in its advance. This is understandable in that while he was born in Tarsus, Gentile territory, he grew up in Jerusalem in the home of Gamaliel and thus understood both cultures.

In Romans 15:19, he shows a pattern of progress in his Gentile mission. He said he had progressed from Jerusalem to Illyricum. It appears he is on his way to Rome. Why? It is the political capital of the world. It is the Gentile capital at the same time and therefore was a prime target for his Christian Gentile initiative. Doubtlessly he felt there was a need for him to present the gospel there, too. He says that much in Romans 1:12-15. He would see learned and elite Gentiles there who needed to be confronted with the transforming power of the gospel. Luke wanted to show that he fulfilled his vision and mission in presenting the gospel to these people as well. Moreover, Luke also had a polemic purpose in mind. He wanted to demonstrate that people in the capital city were responding to its transforming power and it was not causing disruption. This would naturally give the fledgling movement some standing in the eyes of people around the empire who would read his work.

Finally, therefore, I see Luke climaxing his work with Paul in Rome because he wanted to show that while the gospel met with opposition in some places, it was having success in the capital city. In fact, he demonstrates that his hero—Paul—was at liberty to preach the gospel there unhindered. Yet, he makes no mention of his death.⁷³

As a result Luke seemed to have used Acts 1:8 as the theme and index of contents for his work. Moreover, he seemed to have also demonstrated the fulfillment of the command of Acts 1:8 in the programmatic expansion of the gospel. He has done so not just in one chapter of his work, but in the work as a whole. The following outline may further assist in clinching the point:

- I. Acts 1-7 Witnessing in Jerusalem primarily to the Jews and attending to the spiritual and physical needs of fellow Christians
- II. Acts 8-12 Transitional section: the gospel to the ends of the earth
 - A. Persecution takes the gospel through Judea and to Samaria
 - B. Philip and the Samaritan initiative

- C. Conversion of the Eunuch who takes the gospel to his end of the earth
 - D. Conversion of Saul and his preaching in Damascus marking the introduction of the one who will be most effective in spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth
 - E. Peter's role in strengthening the work in Judea and his call to Caesarea (Samaria) for the conversion of Cornelius—The Gentile Pentecost and its effect on the Jerusalem Church
 - F. The progress of the gospel in Gentile territory; Saul and Barnabas in Antioch
 - G. Final note on the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria
- III. Acts 13-28, Paul & the gospel to the ends of the Earth till it reaches Rome
- A. His First Missionary Journey
 - B. The Jerusalem Council
 - C. His Second Missionary Journey
 - D. His Third Missionary Journey
 - E. The Journey to Jerusalem, his arrest, imprisonment, and trials
 - F. His Voyage to Rome and Missionary activities there

Where on earth, then, is the end of the earth? How did Luke and his readers understand this phrase? It appears that the original intent of the phrase was not limited to any particular area of the world. Rather, the phrase seemed to have indicated that the Gospel was to go to the entire world, including near and distant lands. Luke seemed to have demonstrated this progress as he noted its programmed advancement from the religious capital of the world to the political capital. Moreover, he showed its influence in Jewish, Gentile, and African territories as well as on Jews, Romans, Greeks, and Africans. Thus, "From a long-range perspective, however, all peoples are meant (Ps 67:1, 7; Isa 45:22; 49:6; 52:10; so Acts 13:47)."⁷⁴

Bertram L. Melbourne, Ph.D.

Interim Dean and Associate Professor of Biblical Language and Literature
Howard University School of Divinity

Acts 1:8 and the Gospel in Africa

by

*Dr. Bertram Melbourne
School of Divinity
Howard University*

In the previous article we saw that “the end of the earth” in Acts 1:8 could not be limited to Ethiopia, Rome, or any particular location. Rather, it implies that the gospel should go everywhere. This final presentation will take Africa as one “end of the earth” and seek the fulfillment of the gospel there as well as what the eunuch did upon his return to Ethiopia.

On one of my trips to South Africa in the mid-1990s one of my assignments was to teach a course in World Religions to the 35 African pastors in my class. Convinced that it was ludicrous for me to attempt to teach African Indigenous Religions to Africans, I invited them teach that section of the course. After their initial reticence, we settled down to organization in tribal groups and nations for the execution of the task. What I learned not only intrigued but also puzzled me. Here is a brief summary of what I learned:

1. Traditional Tsonga religion featured monotheism and prayer to one God through the departed ancestors. Each morning, the oldest member of the family directed a worship program. Their tribal code of conduct reflects principles similar to the Decalogue, which they did not know. They practiced circumcision and fined anyone found guilty of injustice.
2. Long before the arrival of the European missionaries, the

Kwazulu-Natal tribes practiced the worship of one God whose name meant, "God whose origin cannot be traced." They worshipped this God on their day of rest on which they did no normal manual work. This day of worship called "the day of Prince," was Saturday. They had seven laws that were similar to the Ten Commandments. They include honoring parents, taboo against killing, adultery, stealing, lying, and fornication, as well as worship on the day of rest.

3. Basotho religion worshipped a God called "MOLIMO O DIATLA DI MAROBA, RAMMOLOBI" which means "God with the scars in the hands, the Father of salvation." They practiced circumcision as well as baptism after which the initiates became full-fledged adults. This religion featured a prophetess who gave instructions to its adherents. She predicted the coming of the white missionaries to their territory with a red edged book. She also spoke of the world war at a time when it was still future.
4. The peoples of Batswana worshipped one supreme God, MODIMO, called Lowe or Creator. One could approach him through the ancestors. These people believed that from the very times of Lowe (Creator) worship was on Saturdays which in their language means the "Day of Washing." It indicated the washing of the soul. People got spiritual cleansing on that day.
5. Finally, Xhosa religion was monotheistic. The meaning of their name for God speaks to his pre-existence. It means "the one who was there before." Their tradition says he pre-existed, is personal in nature, and identifies with all human problems. They prayed on the mountains to this God but only through their ancestors who they regard as mediators between him and them. Moreover, they saw God as infinite and believed he was in existence before humans. No one has ever tried to trace his beginning or decide how he looks but they knew him to be a great and mighty supernatural being. They so respected God that they allowed no one to point to the skies with a finger or fingers. They even placed a taboo on calling his name in vain. They had a prophet who predicted the coming of a people with hair like milk (white) who would bring money and a book. He

admonished them to accept the book but not the money. He said sin would abound so much that children will smoke. He even spoke of the Coming of their God.⁷⁵

I questioned these developments since they predated the arrival of the European missionaries. These ideas intrigued but puzzled, especially the Christian notions of a God with scars in hands, the Father of salvation, baptism, the Coming of God, etc. I questioned and agonized with myself concerning the origin of these notions. Yet, it was other ideas that I had gleaned in South Africa that began to pave the way for the resolution of my dilemma. I learned that, especially among the Zulus, there was a religion called Zionism. As I compared it with a similar religion that has expressions in the Americas, I saw that they were identical. I also discovered that the name for porridge was the same in South Africa as in the Caribbean. Moreover, there is a cornmeal dish is widely used in the Caribbean that is also found in Africa. More interestingly is the fact that both Antiguan and Senegalese give it the same name, Fungey. I began searching for explanations for these phenomena.

I discovered that many South African tribes actually originated in West and Central Africa from where they migrated south. Moreover, the slave trade took people from that same region—Central and West Africa—to the Caribbean and the Americas which explains the similarities in practices, religions, and beliefs. My answer then was migration. Voluntary migration took Zionism South and forced migration took it to the Caribbean. As I contemplated the implications of migration, I began to get my answer for the presence of these practices prior to the arrival of the missionaries and their brand of Christianity. My preliminary hypothesis became that migration held the key to the presence of Christian practices in parts of Africa that predated the arrival of the European missionaries and thus demonstrated fulfillment of Acts 1:8. Furthermore, it was then that the richness of Africa's Christian past began to dawn on me with its full weight and gravity. But the question still remains, what is the relationship between migration and Africa's rich Christian past?

My analysis of Africa's rich Christian past begins in Biblical times. Indeed, as I suggest in a forthcoming book, "There seems to be something to speak of in terms of Africa, Africans, Israel and infants. Not only have many Jews lived there, but Egypt has traditionally been

a place of refuge at various times for them."⁷⁶ Of the many examples, most significant would be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus. However, my main concern here is a quote that Matthew makes from Hosea that says, "Out of Egypt have I called my son?"⁷⁷ What did Matthew mean by this statement and how does it relate to our task?

It is true that in its original *sitz im leben* the text refers to God's rescue of Israel from slavery and Egyptian bondage. However, could that be the point—its connection with deliverance? Hosea refers to Israel as God's son. In Matthew, the voice from heaven refers to Jesus as God's beloved son with whom he is well pleased.⁷⁸ Could this imply there was a son with whose deeds God was not pleased? This is a very plausible deduction. Deliverance from a famine for Israel—God's first son with whom he might not have been pleased—came as a result of an escape to Egypt. Her preparation for and liberation from slavery and bondage was also made in Egypt. Similarly, deliverance for God's second Son, his beloved one, from Herod's sword came because of an escape to Egypt and preparation for his deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin was made in Egypt. Equally true is the fact that Israel's preparation occurred during her infancy as a nation, even as Jesus' preparation occurred during his infancy.

Moreover, just as Israel's preparation preceded her exodus from Egypt, even so Jesus' preparation preceded his exodus.⁷⁹ Walvoord and Zuck see Matthew viewing Jesus as identifying with Israel. They cite similarities between the nation and the son.⁸⁰ Just like the nation Israel, Jesus was to experience an exodus. Unlike the nation, his was not for his personal deliverance. It was to be for his people. He therefore went to Egypt for preparation in the tradition of Israel. They seem correct in his observation that in both cases the trip to Egypt was to escape danger, and the return was important to the nation's providential history.⁸¹ Joseph Taylor notes the following statement, "When the son of God developed problems with the European Herod, God sent him into Africa; by this we know that Africans have naturally a true spirit of Christianity."⁸²

It remains that Africa seems to be the place of refuge for Israel. More importantly, it appears that the place of preparation for God's sons in their infancy was Africa. Does God have a special attachment to Egypt and Africa and is this what Matthew is highlighting? The point is that Africa generally and Egypt in particular was the place of

escape, refuge, and preparation for the infant founder of Christianity to save his life from the wrath and venom of a jealous Herod who had a bad reputation for murder and intrigue.

As we have seen, Jesus commissioned his disciples to begin preaching in Jerusalem, then to go to Judea, and Samarian and then the rest of the world (Acts 1:8). Luke notes that on the day of Pentecost there were people from Africa who witnessed the out-pouring of the Spirit on the apostles.⁸³ He mentions Egypt, Lybia, and Cyrene. There is no explicit statement in the NT saying that any Egyptian espoused Christianity. It is conceivable, however, that one from this group of Egyptians who witnessed Pentecost might have returned to evangelize the homeland.

While from scripture we do not have the evidence to make a definitive statement, we know that Christianity indeed went to Egypt. The presence of the Coptic Christians throughout Christian history speaks to this fact. In addition, Christian tradition has not left us bereft. Eusebius and other sources claim that St. Mark, the author of the second Gospel, evangelized Egypt.⁸⁴ Another source asserts that Mark was the first apostle of Egypt.⁸⁵ The Coptic Church celebrates Mark as its founder and holds that the veracity of their claim is beyond question. They even conduct visits to his tomb.⁸⁶

The Egyptians seemed to have responded positively to the gospel. Mark Shaw notes that by the late second century Christianity was thriving in Egypt. Demetrius, as bishop of Egypt, supervised a large number of churches, subordinates, and patrons of a rising theological school.⁸⁷ It also appears that early Egyptian Christianity came to be ascetic and later Gnosticism influenced it. In the second century, Egyptian Christianity became Jewish. However, between AD 200 and 313 Jewish Christianity in Egypt was Hellenized. Egyptian Christianity reached maturity in the years after the legalization of Christianity in AD 313. From then until the Muslim invasion of the seventh century, it was the Coptic Church and a massive indigenization occurred, rooting the faith in a way that prepared it for challenges that conflicts with Islam would bring.⁸⁸ At any rate, Egypt, part of Africa, was one of the early Christian countries.

The three synoptic gospels attest that a man named Simon assisted Jesus in carrying the cross along the *Via Dolorosa*.⁸⁹ While the name Simon is of Jewish extract, Simon is an African. He was a native

of Cyrene, the capital of the Roman province of Cyrenaica. It is located in North Africa in the modern Libya. Felder thinks he is of Afro-Asiatic stock.⁹⁰ Our concern here is to note that an African who assisted the founder of Christianity to carry his cross of suffering on which he made atonement for the sins of the world.

What became of Simon after this event? Not much is said or known. However, I refuse to believe that he could have remained the same after such an encounter with Jesus. The testimony of scripture is that no one remained the same after encountering Jesus. I would therefore assume that he became a Christian. Does the early presence of Christianity in Cyrene indicate that he was instrumental in helping to establish it there?

Again, we know that representatives of Cyrene were present at Pentecost and witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was an awesome experience and appeared to have positively influenced some of them to accept Christianity. They were among those Christians living in Jerusalem who experienced the post-Pentecost ideal *koinonia*.⁹¹ They were also among those who were scattered by the persecution, which ensued following the stoning of Stephen. Some of them became missionaries and evangelized Gentiles in Antioch.⁹² Furthermore, one of the four leaders (called prophets and teachers) in the Church of Antioch who corroborated to send out the first Christian missionaries was an African from Cyrene. Luke gives his name as Lucius of Cyrene.⁹³

If the Cyrenians were so mission oriented to participate in that task to such an extent in Antioch, why wouldn't some of them return home to evangelize their homeland. I propose that they were and that Simon, Lucius, and their other compatriots must have either returned themselves at some point or influenced others to return to plant Christianity in Cyrene. Thus, this could explain the early presence of Christianity in that section of Africa.

Acts 2 also indicates that representatives from other sections of Africa were present on the day of Pentecost. Luke also lists Lybia as another region of African that had representatives at this glorious and life-changing event. Here, he becomes more specific nothing that these people were from parts "of Libya about Cyrene."

Acts 8:26-39 gives an interesting glimpse at the forward march of Christianity and shows how the Holy Spirit directed its growth and

development. This story shows the Spirit guiding Philip to meet an Ethiopian eunuch who was on his way from the Jerusalem temple. Luke says this Eunuch was the Finance Minister belonging to the court of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. If the black heritage of the other Africans cited thus far is questioned, there should be no questions with this one. He was definitely of black origin. Felder notes that this passage "unambiguously deals with black Africa in relation to the Holy Land in the New Testament."⁹⁴ The Black Jews of Ethiopia are renowned and might help us dismiss Eurocentric interpretations.⁹⁵

Philip studied with the eunuch, enlightened him and then he requested baptism. Philip told him that if he believed with all his heart he could be baptized. He replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Philip baptized him and was taken away while the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. For Luke this meant that the eunuch took the Gospel to his end of the earth in fulfillment of Jesus' command in Acts 1:8. Did this eunuch spread the gospel in Ethiopia? We are not told for sure but at least he took it there with him. Furthermore, Church history attests to Christianity in Ethiopia from the early centuries,⁹⁶ and Ethiopia has the reputation of being one of the first Christian nations.⁹⁷

While most people think the rise of Islam in Ethiopia affected Christianity, the contrary is true. Ethiopia not only survived in some areas, it thrived. Besides, the spirit of survival created a culture that received the name Ethiopianism.⁹⁸ Could this name mean anything in this struggle, especially since Ethiopia is one area that seemed to have survived Islam's onslaught with its Christian heritage thriving. Later in the northern corner of Ethiopia, a new kingdom known as Axum emerged. It became a strong center of Christianity⁹⁹ that even resisted Rome's attempts to institute Sunday worship.¹⁰⁰

Acts 13:1 attests to Christianity's tremendous growth in Antioch in Syria. This church thrived in Gentile territory. The diversity of its leadership perhaps speaks for its appeal. Its growth was remarkable and its vision and missionary outlook was outstanding. Forty percent of its leadership was of African descent. Luke notes that its leaders included Simeon Niger and Lucius of Cyrene. Since we have already discussed the latter, we will concentrate on the former. While Luke does not record his nationality or place of origin, he notes that he was named Simeon Niger. The word Niger is of Latin derivative. It is the

root of our English “N-word” and means “Black.”¹⁰¹ Johnson suggests it “may in fact be a nickname suggestive of an African origin.”¹⁰² Felder says it is “a Latinism for ‘the black man.’”¹⁰³

While Luke does not give us Simeon’s from origin, his designation as a Black implies his background. It suggests we should regard him as of African descent. As such, was he also instrumental in taking the gospel there and thus of adding to Africa’s rich Christian past?

Acts 18:24 notes that a certain North African Jew from the city of Alexandria named Apollos went to Ephesus while Paul was there with Aquila and Priscilla. He was eloquent in speech, which meant he was versed in rhetoric and the Alexandrian method of delivery. He was also mighty in the scriptures. The passage says he received instruction in the way of the Lord, but only knew about the baptism of John.

Luke does not state where he came from to Ephesus. One could assume, however, that it may have been Alexandria, his homeland. If this is the case, was he instructed in Christianity there? If so, this means it had already reached this leading center of Hellenistic and Platonic thinking. It is often referred to as a Hellenistic metropolis. Some argue that Christianity had not yet arrived there and so he may have met and was instructed by disciples of John the Baptist. There is a variant reading of the passage found in the D family of manuscripts that suggests his instruction about the Lord took place in his own country.¹⁰⁴ If this is the case, then Christianity must have reached this great center of learning very early. Metzger suggests a date of around A.D. 50 based on this variant reading.¹⁰⁵ This would imply that in fulfillment of Acts 1:8 the gospel had reached another country in the continuing development of this rich Christian heritage in Africa.

This notwithstanding, Eusebius, the early church historian, records a tradition that suggests that when Mark was sent to evangelize Egypt he established churches in Alexandria. He notes that Mark’s first convert was a shoemaker named Annanias who later became the second bishop of Alexandria.¹⁰⁶ A post-canonical work, *The Acts of Mark*, says they martyred Mark in Alexandria around AD 66.¹⁰⁷

Now, how do we reconcile the notion that Apollos received his instruction in his home country with that suggesting that Mark is the one who established Christianity there? Is there a conflict between these facts? Actually, there is not. Eusebius says that Mark went to Alexandria in the third year of Claudius which would be around AD 43. Paul was

not in Ephesus until a decade or so later. If this is the case, then Apollos could indeed have been converted to Christianity in his homeland.

Christianity grew and flourished in Alexandria. A great catechetical school developed there, perhaps as a reaction to Gnosticism. It became a great Christian center in Africa. It had great thinkers and church fathers such as: Athanasius,¹⁰⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Didymus the blind, Jerome, and Gregory of Nazianzus. It played a role in the Christological controversies of the fourth century.¹⁰⁹

The New Testament does not mention Carthage but it became one of the great Christian centers in North Africa. It seemed to have thrived so much that it attracted the attention and ire of the rulers. In AD 180, seven men and five women were martyred there because of their profession of Christianity.¹¹⁰ The first of these martyrs to die was Namphano who bore a Punic name, i.e. he was a native of the area and was most likely a Black.¹¹¹ In a second wave of persecution that came later, the noblewoman Perpetua and her African slave girl, Feticitas, who had introduced her to Christianity, were also martyred.¹¹² They demonstrated the power of Christianity and its transforming ethic in that they died hand in hand demonstrating that there are no walls of partition in Christ.

As a stronghold of Christianity, Carthage produced scholars and thinkers as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, described as "one of Africa's greatest sons." They helped to set the spiritual tone of the church.¹¹³ Other Great Christian leaders influencing Christianity's growth include three African Popes of Rome¹¹⁴ Victor (189-199 AD), Melchides (311-312 AD) who was credited for leading Christianity's final triumph over Rome and St. Gelasis (496 AD).

Elizabeth Isichei lists three main themes of Christianity in Africa from the time of Clement to the 19th Century: The continuing life of the Coptic and Ethiopian churches; unsuccessful attempts to convert Muslim North Africa, and the history of the Catholic churches founded in Black Africa. I see a fourth or parallel theme. The migratory theme presupposes migration for trade, migration because of relocation occasioned by war, and migration resulting from voluntary relocation of tribes. Pockets of Christianity developed among many African peoples and tribes. Largely responsible for this was the developing influence of the African prophets.

Let us test this hypothesis. The Abugasii peoples of Kenya claim to have migrated from Egypt.¹¹⁵ So too do the Lembas of South Africa¹¹⁶ and the Kalenjin.¹¹⁷ The Twi speaking peoples of the Ashanti tribe of Ghana have also been associated with Egypt by some researchers.¹¹⁸ The Vhavendas of South Africa trace their roots to Central Africa through Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.¹¹⁹ The people of Botswana trace their origins to Central Africa by way of Zambia and Zimbabwe.¹²⁰ Basothos claim to originate from the Mopeoli whose roots also go back to Egypt.¹²¹

This hypothesis therefore seems to have some merit. It is my thesis that from some areas that first received Christianity, it spread by migration or trade through the rest of Africa. As it did, it combined with traditional African religions. Zionism in South Africa and the Americas, for instance, reflect this blend. How sad that when the missionaries arrived in Africa, rather than looking for similarities in African traditional religions and building on them, they rejected all of African religion as pagan and transplanted European and American culture and practices with Christianity. I maintain that stressing differences divide but emphasizing and accentuating similarities unite. The following words of an African Christian are instructive and can help us put things into perspective:

Since the impact of Western civilization on this continent, and since the advent of missionary work, the real spirit of Africa has been suppressed ... Whatever there was in Africa was stamped down as 'heathen' ... Missionaries do not just give Africa Christ, and leave Africa to repent. They have said, 'If you want to belong to Christ, you must speak and act like the white man' ... The early converts came out of their villages, and were separated from the rest of their people. Their faith was such that they turned back and looked upon their fellow people as heathen. ... The real question has been, if one accepts Christianity, does it mean that everything in one's former culture has to die out?¹²²

There has been a resurgence of the truly African Religions resulting in a major growth of Christianity on the continent. This has occurred through the independent churches. These churches seemed to have started in large measure due to this strangle hold of the traditional churches. What we find here, as Hayward concurs, is a struggle for the African spirit to express itself.¹²³ The results confirm

this notion: The authorities in South Africa listed one thousand names of known separatist churches in 1963.¹²⁴ By 1996, 33% of ten million blacks belonged to an independent church. In 1962, participants at a conference from Central Africa could identify fifty independent groups and fifty-seven in Nigeria.¹²⁵ In 1977, Kenya had about 210 independent churches. By 1984, the number grew to 300.¹²⁶

J. J. Nortey notes that between 1900 and 1957 growth of Seventh-day Adventists in Ghana was slow. In 1957, there were thirty recorded churches but by 1980, that number had grown to five hundred and seventy.¹²⁷ Dr. Jan Paulsen, General Conference President of the Seventh-day Adventists notes that in 1963, there were 10, 000 baptized Seventh-day Adventists in Ghana but by 2002, that number had grown to at least 300, 000. Significantly, this explosive growth took place after the foreign missionaries handed the work back to the leadership of the local people.¹²⁸

The Ethiopian evangelical church grew from 200,000 in 1960 to 8, 000, 000 in 1997.¹²⁹ While there were an estimated ten million Christians in Africa in 1900, 143 million in 1970, there were some 393 million in 2000.¹³⁰ The Christian History Institute gives the following picture, there was an estimated eight or nine million Christians in Africa in 1900, 8 to 9% and some 335 million in 2000, about 45%.¹³¹ This means that Africa has become a large center of Christianity and the place where missionaries once targeted now sends missionaries to the countries from which their missionaries once came. To what should we attribute such phenomenal growth? I believe the responsible factors include:

- The release of the African spirit.
- The natural religious nature of Africans and their rich religious heritage and tradition
- The return of the evangelization of Africans to Africans as the missionaries departed or handed over the control of the church to Africans.
- The growth of independent churches motivated by the work of African Christian Prophets.

Let's explore this latter point to which we have alluded a few times. Prophets emerged in the African churches in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. They preached messages that met the needs of the people and started independent churches and/or movements

that converted thousands thus challenging the influence of the traditional churches.

Garrick Braide (1882-1918) was one such prophet. Born in the Niger delta, he was a fisherman. He was baptized in 1910. His life was changed after a visionary experience at a communion service after which he began to preach and heal. His preaching attracted mostly members of the mission churches whose deepest needs were not being met. Assuming the stance of OT prophets like Malachi and Isaiah, he became known as Elijah II. The topics of his preaching included dependence on God and Sabbath observance. His most stirring attacks were on the large consumption of liquor as well as the worship of idols, fetishes and charms. Consumption of liquor fell considerably as a direct result of his preaching. This aroused the ire of the colonial establishment. They arrested him and placed him in prison where he died.¹³²

William Wade Harris (1865-1929) was a Liberian prophet. He is regarded as the most outstanding of the major African prophets (Bradford, 164). He was a teacher and interpreter who was converted through a vision he received while in prison where he was serving a sentence for a political matter. He underwent an outward change as a symbol of his inner transformation. He walked all over West Africa going from country to country with his call for obedience to God's commandments. He preached to non-Christians and, according to Isichei, he was the most successful evangelist in West Africa. Though rejected in his homeland he had a considerable impact in other countries and baptized as many as "100,000 to 120,000 in a year and permanently rewrote the religious geography of the Ivory Coast."¹³³ His ministry was brief but spectacular, according to Bradford. He taught that worship should be on the Sabbath day.¹³⁴

Johane Maranke (1912-1963) was a prophet among the Shona peoples. He was called to office by a voice that told him he was John the Baptist and an apostle who should go forth to preach against adultery, stealing, and anger. He was also admonished that he should baptize people and observe the Sabbath. He founded the largest independent church in Central Africa. His followers, called apostles, numbered more than half a million and were located in seven countries in 1995.¹³⁵

John Masowe (1915-1973) was another Shona prophet. He founded the Apostolic Sabbath Church of God in 1932. He, too,

identified with John the Baptist and saw himself as a messenger to black people. He disappeared into the wilderness where he and his disciples worshipped in the open air. His followers became pilgrims and strangers who migrated all over southern Africa. Like the followers of Johane Maranke, his followers were also called apostles. They worshiped a God called Yahweh. They followed the dietary laws of the Old Testament scriptures and kept the biblical Sabbath.¹³⁶

The greatest of the Zulu prophets was Isaiah Shembe (1870-1935). A poet and song writer, he learned to read and write at age forty to be able to record his hymns—numbering about 250. He founded one of the most influential churches in Africa which is totally separate from missionary or foreign control. He saw himself as “a chief/king, a people’s king, the ideal Old Testament ruler.”¹³⁷ He had a burning desire to improve the lot of his people and restore their former glory. Rather than choosing politics to accomplish this goal, he chose to do it through religion. He used the Bible to establish a moral basis for his preaching and his actions. In the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, he rebuked the sins of ruler and people alike. He advocated worship of the biblical Sabbath rather than Sunday. Associating Sunday worship with the Jesus of the white missionaries, he chose to identify instead with the Sabbath of God, Jehovah. He saw the Sabbath as essential to the wholeness and well-being of Africans.¹³⁸

Simon Kimbangu was a remarkable African prophet. He and his wife were baptized in 1915 and though he received the call to preach and teach shortly thereafter, he resisted it. He finally accepted the call in 1921. He immediately made an impact with both his preaching and his healing. He attracted such large crowds that both the Protestant and Catholic religious establishments became alarmed. They appealed to the colonial authorities who sought his arrest. After hiding from them for a while, he surrendered and was sentenced to death. Some of the Protestant leaders relented on their decision and appealed to the Belgian government to pardon him. They responded by commuting his sentence to life imprisonment, instead. His ministry lasted only six brief months but his influence was sufficient to scare the traditional church leaders and to lay a great foundation for his movement.¹³⁹

It is unmistakable that the influence of these great, charismatic, sincere and visionary leaders had a terrific impact on the development of the African Christian religions. Their conversion stories are

remarkable and their influence speaks volumes about the effect of the release of the African spirit. No evaluation of Christianity in Africa is complete without recognition of their great contributions.

As we look back at 2000 years of Christianity in Africa, there are many valuable lessons we can learned from African's rich Christian past and from the spread of Christianity over the continent. These insights can prove invaluable as move forward in global missions for the complete fulfillment of Jesus' command in Acts 1:8.

Bertram L. Melbourne, Ph.D.

Interim Dean and Associate Professor of Biblical Language & Literature

Howard University School of Divinity

The Search for African Roots and the Biblical Sabbath

by

Emory J. Tolbert
Department of History
Howard University

Introduction

A 1952 issue of *Jet* magazine, the popular Black American weekly, featured Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia on the front cover. Beneath his picture was the caption "Africa's Last King." This is representative of the importance placed on Ethiopia and its Kings by African Americans, beginning during the days of slavery. Except for Egypt, Ethiopia was the African place-name that was found most frequently in the Bible. Black preachers, during and after slavery, noted that the Bible predicted Ethiopia would "stretch forth her hand." Indeed, "kings" would come from Ethiopia to worship God.

As people of African descent living in the Americas realized the king of Ethiopia was a contemporary being, and not a figure found only in scripture, interest in the modern nation of Ethiopia increased. When the 1896 Italian invasion of Ethiopia was repelled at the famous battle of Adowa by King Menelik II and his armies, Black America rejoiced. In 1935, when Benito Mussolini sought to avenge the defeat of the Italian forces by invading once again, African Americans wrote to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt requesting permission to join the Ethiopian Army. They sent funds and held rallies to support Ethiopia, which at that time was the last independent nation on the African continent.¹⁴⁰

Black America's Image of Ethiopia

At the end of the eighteenth century, antislavery movements were well established in England and making gains in the United States. After propagating three centuries of unparalleled human suffering and slaughter, the transatlantic slave trade had earned a well-deserved reputation for a level cruelty that challenged European and American claims to civility and Christian piety. Indeed, in the United States it was seen as an important key to economic growth. African nations had never controlled the Atlantic trading corridors. Nevertheless, temporary wealth and power sometimes came to those who cooperated with Europeans in conducting the trade that Africans called the "Way of Death."

The effort to maintain the slave trade by those Europeans and Americans who reaped generous profits led to pro-slavery propaganda that was meant to justify slave trading as appropriate Christian behavior. Many pro-slavery ministers throughout Europe and its colonies confronted the anti-slavery movement with claims of innate African inferiority based on alleged biblical sanctions against Africans and their descendants. In reply, slavery's opponents launched a formidable campaign around the theme of human equality under God, also using biblical references. Anti-slavery Christian ministers, writers and politicians, both Black and White, participated in the effort. This essay begins with an examination of African-American ministers, writers and activists in the fight against slavery.

The initial task was to establish a more accurate image of Africa and Africans. The quest for a positive image of Africans began early in the literary history of African Americans. Arguments defending the humanity of Blacks and attacking the institution of slavery abounded in the writings of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Blacks. The Prince Hall Masons, who called themselves "Brethren of the African Lodge," were organized by a Barbados-born Black minister who had fought on the side of the colonists at Bunker Hill. In his 1792 address before the newly organized lodge, Prince Hall began to "cite some of our forefathers, for their imitation." Among them were heroes of the early Christian Church like Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. Hall had reasoned, as did many other African Americans, that since Carthage had been an important center during the formative years of Christianity, early Christians who were North African by birth, or who

had studied in Carthage, could logically be claimed as forefathers and mothers by people of African descent.¹⁴¹ By claiming a role for Africans in the growth of the early church, Hall and others challenged the image of Africa as ahistorical and undeveloped. St Clair Drake, the late African American sociologist, referenced other Black anti-slavery writers:

In February 1829, one Robert Alexander Young applied for a copyright for his pamphlet entitled *The Ethiopian Manifesto, Issues in Defense of the Black Man's Rights in the Scale of Universal Freedom*. The next year the most militant of the pamphleteers, David Walker, in *His Appeal ... to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, wrote: "Though our cruel oppressors and murderers may (if possible) treat us more cruel, as Pharaoh did the children of Israel, yet the God of the Ethiopians, has been pleased to hear our moans in consequence of oppression; and the day of redemption from abject wretchedness draweth near." Later, despite his denunciation of the oppressive pharaoh, he wrote of other Egyptians who were "wise legislators," and produced pyramids, also "turning the channel of the Nile." He called them "sons of Africa or of Ham, among whom learning originated, and was carried thence into Greece where it was improved upon and refined."

Young and Walker were Free Negroes who had read widely and knew something of history and geography. The less sophisticated slaves did not fix their attention on Ethiopia and had little reason to admire Egypt which, for them, was the country where lived the pharaoh who had oppressed "God's chosen people." When the spirituals grew up on the plantations, some of them expressed identification with Moses and "the mixed multitude" that he led "out of the house of bondage," with an Ethiopian wife at his side. The Egyptian pharaoh who pursued the Jews fleeing slavery was the villain. The slaves sang: "Go down Moses; / Way down in Egypt's Land; / Tell Ol' Pharaoh / Let my people go." They exulted in his

defeat as Jehovah showed his hand, singing, "Oh, Mary don' you weep / Oh Mary, don' you moan; / Pharaoh's army got drowned." It was only after Emancipation that Egypt could become a master symbol in Afro-American liberation mythology and racial advancement ideology.¹⁴²

Drake noted the influence of Biblical teaching on African-American concepts of history and geography:

Both slaves and Free Negroes knew that Egypt and Ethiopia were said to be in Africa, the place where some of them had been born and from which some of the ancestors of all of them had come. Those who became familiar with the Bible knew that both places were somewhere in the vicinity of "the Holy Land." (The Creation story referred to a "river of Ethiopia" as being one of the boundaries of the Garden of Eden.) But the exact geographical location of Ethiopia, prior to the late nineteenth century, was never a matter of much concern to Afro-Americans. Ethiopia was both the name of a place—whose location somewhere in Africa as vague and a metaphor for a widely scattered diaspora people, as was the term "Israel." However, by the end of the nineteenth century, better-educated Afro-Americans were becoming interested in the fate of the specific areas in Africa referred to by Jews, Greeks, and Romans as Ethiopia, the land inhabited by "the people with the burnt faces."¹⁴³

Eight years after David Walker published his *Appeal*, a Black minister in Hartford, Connecticut named Hosea Easton wrote a *Treatise on the Intellectual Character and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the United States*. In this 1837 work, Easton described "the European branch of Japhet's family" as having been in "the deepest state of heathenish barbarity" before the sixteenth century. By contrast, Africans had produced the earliest civilizations, later sharing their genius with the war-like Europeans. In 1844, a "Committee of Colored

Gentlemen" in Boston published Robert Benjamin Lewis' book, *Light and Truth: Containing the Universal History of the Colored and Indian Race, from the Creation of the World to the Present Time*. In it he asserted that many civilizations had developed from ancient Ethiopia, and that many ancient luminaries, such as Plato, Homer, and Euclid, were "Negroes."

The themes of these 19th century African American writers were embraced by their descendants and have become a permanent part of their understanding of Africa's place in history. The ideas have changed very little over time. Indeed, these writers established an understanding of what it means to be a Black person of African descent that has served as a form of protection against the anti-African religious, historical, and pseudoscientific propaganda of contemporary and future decades.

America's "Ethiopian" Movements

There were several "Ethiopian" movements among Blacks in the United States and the Caribbean during the early 20th century. In some cases they were intended to focus on Africa as a whole, with "Ethiopia" being the name that the ancient Greeks gave to the black-skinned people of that continent. In other cases, they singled out the modern nation-state of Ethiopia as the object of their interest.

A revival of religious and political dialogue among Blacks in the United States and the Caribbean began shortly before the First World War and extended into the 1930s. Most of the movements that came out of this dialogue were labeled "black nationalist" because they looked to Africa as a source of inspiration. The largest was led by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who, between 1919-1921, organized the largest mass movement among people of African descent to that time. Ethiopia was a powerful symbol among his supporters and followers, who created a new Black international anthem with the title, "Ethiopia, Land of our Fathers." The Garvey movement, as it was called, was the largest and most widely recognized but not the first of the Black movements lionizing Ethiopia and its kings.

It appears that the visit of an Ethiopian delegation to New York City in 1917 first sparked renewed interest in Ethiopia among Black Americans.¹⁴⁴ Attired in flowing, colorful robes, these Africans came to renew their treaty with the United States government. They were denied lodging at the city's major hotels. Hotels in Harlem, the

city's black community, welcomed them. Consequently, the Ethiopians included among their demands a stipulation in the new treaty that they not be treated like Black Americans, who were restricted and humiliated by pervasive segregation laws. It became clear that a sovereign nation in Africa could achieve what years of lobbying and petitions to the courts did not win for Black citizens of the United States.

Soon small groups in New York City, Chicago and other cities began calling themselves "Ethiopian." By 1920, the Abyssinians, a break-away faction of the Garvey Movement, attracted considerable attention through the actions of its leader, Grover Cleveland Redding, who led a colorful parade through South Chicago that ended in violence. Other groups, like the Moorish American Science Temple, a precursor to Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, continued a theme that emphasized Black America's African origins over their citizenship in the United States.

The ultimate endorsement of their interest in Ethiopia came for many African Americans in 1930 when the young Prince Ras Tafari, now Emperor Haile Selassie, called on African Americans to come there to establish communities and give technical and economic support. At Haile Selassie's elaborate coronation, the British government had been represented by the Prince of Wales, who dutifully bowed before the new monarch to the astonishment and delight of his subjects. Photographs of the gesture circulated around the world, giving the rather overly-optimistic impression to many that a new era had arrived in Africa's relationship with the rest of the world. Eventually, some groups of Black Americans did resettle in Ethiopia, the most notable being Rabbi Ford, who took members of his Sabbath-keeping Harlem (New York) congregation there in the 1930s.

The religious movement known as the Rastafarians had its roots in the Caribbean. Although their ideal included going to Ethiopia, most remained in the western hemisphere, where they elevated Haile Selassie to the level of a deity. This was perhaps the best known manifestation of Ethiopianism in the West. Clearly, Ethiopia and its monarchs were symbols of great importance to many among the African American population in many parts of the Americas. Ethiopia and its emperors represented the survival of Africa against onslaughts from abroad. Many believed that hope for Africa's children in all parts of the world rested in Ethiopia.

Sabbath Keeping in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has great significance in the history of this planet. Indeed, the numerous references to Ethiopia as a nation and a symbol in both biblical and secular history confirm Ethiopia's significance. One of the ways in which Ethiopia and its leaders etched their names in world history was by adhering to established beliefs based on their reading of the Bible.

The focus of this essay now shifts to the subject of Sabbath-keeping in Ethiopia. It is appropriate to begin with quotes from the research of John Nevins Andrews, one of the early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and the denomination's first missionary. Ellen G. White urged Andrews to write a book on the Sabbath throughout history. The first edition of his book, *History of the Sabbath*, published in 1862, informed all subsequent writing on the subject by Adventist authors. In a chapter with the title, "Sabbath during the Dark Ages," he wrote:

... We are now in search for the Sabbath among those who were never subjected to the Roman pontiff. In Central Africa, from the first part of the Christian Era - perhaps from the time of the conversion of the Ethiopian officer of great authority [Acts 8: 26-40] - have existed the churches of Abyssinia and Ethiopia. About [the] time of the accession of the Roman bishop to supremacy they were lost sight of by the nations of Europe. "Encompassed on all sides" says Gibbon, "by enemies of their religion, the Ethiopians slept nearly a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten." [Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 47] In the early part of the sixteenth century they were again brought to the knowledge of the world by the discovery of the Portuguese navigators. Undoubtedly they had, during this long period, been affected by the dense darkness of pagan and Mahometan errors with which they were encompassed; and in many respects they had lost the pure and spiritual religion

of our divine Redeemer. A modern traveler says of them: "They had divers errors and many ancient truths. [Maxon's *History of the Sabbath*, p. 33] Michael Geddes says of them:

"The Abyssinians do hold the Scriptures to be the perfect rule of the Christian Faith; insomuch that they deny it to be the power of the general council to oblige people to believe anything as an article of faith without an express warrant from thence." [Michael Geddes, *Church History of Ethiopia*, p. 31]

Modern historians would interpret these passages with attention to the times in which the authors lived. Of course, Ethiopia never slept in the way that Gibbon stated. Ethiopia was simply out of Europe's orbit at a time when Europe, not Ethiopia, was going through the Dark Ages. And, while Ethiopia was influenced by the "error" surrounding it, so was Europe. J.N. Andrews illustrated this in the same passage. He makes it clear that Ethiopians refused to accept practices and adopt beliefs that had spread throughout Europe but were not biblical:

"Transubstantiation and the adoration of the consecrated bread in the sacrament, were what the Abyssinians abhorred. They deny purgatory, and know nothing of confirmation and extreme unction; they condemn graven images; they keep both Saturday and Sunday." [Michael Geddes, *Church History of Ethiopia*, pp. 87, 88]

In 1534, the Court of Lisbon summoned Ethiopia's ambassador to Portugal to explain why Ethiopians abstained from all labor on Saturday. He stated:

"Because God, after he had finished the creation of the world, rested thereon; which day as God would have it called the holy of holies, so...not celebrating thereof with great honor and devotion, seems to be plainly contrary to God's will and precept, who will suffer heaven and earth to pass away sooner than his word; and that especially, since Christ came not

to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. It is not therefore in imitation of the Jews, but in obedience to Christ and his holy apostles, that we observe that day.”
[Geddes, pp. 87,88]

J.N. Andrews notes that the Ethiopian ambassador was also called upon to explain Sunday observance in his country. In this case he offered no scriptural defense, saying only that his countrymen did so in the manner of other Christians in memory of Christ’s resurrection.

Origins of Christianity in Ethiopia

Both tradition and the biblical account recognize The Apostle Phillip’s encounter with an Ethiopian official as the beginning of Christianity in Ethiopia. That official took the gospel to his countrymen and, from that point to the present, Christians and Christianity has been a part of Ethiopia’s cultural and social fabric. The well-known expert on ancient history and culture, Dr. Frank Snowden, published the best studies of black-skinned people in the ancient world. He wrote this about the Ethiopian official:

The Ethiopian man, as the eunuch was described, meant a black man and in the minds of most, a Negro from the south of Egypt. The eunuch became admired as a model of the diligent reader of the Scriptures.¹⁴⁵ Later, there is ample evidence of the influence of Christianity in Ethiopia:

By the end of the fourth century pilgrims from Ethiopia and the neighboring country of Egypt had visited Palestine. Jerome, writing at the beginning of the fifth century in a letter celebrating the triumphs of Christianity, noted that among the monks welcomed daily in Palestine were Ethiopians.¹⁴⁶

Even more remarkable were the interpretations of biblical references to black people. In this case, two clerics of the fourth and fifth centuries, Origen and Quodvultdeus, offered commentary. Snowden states:

During the first six centuries of Christianity, blacks were summoned to salvation and were welcomed in the Christian brotherhood on the same terms as

other converts. Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian was a landmark in the evangelization of the world. Origen and his exegetical disciples made it clear that all men, regardless of the color of their skin, were called to the faith, and in their interpretations they employed a deeply spiritualized black-white imagery. As late as the fifth and sixth centuries, Christian writers were still adhering to Origen's reading of the scriptural Ethiopians. The mid-fifth century *Book of God's Promises and Predictions*, attributed to Quodvultdeus, an African bishop, chose Origen's Ethiopians to illustrate the prophetic truth of the Old Testament: the criticism of Jesus for associating with sinners and publicans had been foreshadowed by the critics of Moses for his marriage to the Ethiopian woman, and Christ had taken as his bride an Ethiopian, the church of the Nations, who had said, "I am black and beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem."¹⁴⁷

Snowden also asserted that there were numerous examples of pious black Africans who earned the praise of their contemporaries.

The faith of the early Christians, including Sabbath keeping, was maintained in Ethiopia from the beginning. However, Ethiopia was never really isolated. The continuous trips of Ethiopian Christians to Palestine reminded the rest of Christendom of their existence. Indeed Ethiopians were not overlooked in the continuing attempts to abolish the seventh-day Sabbath. They were not beyond the influence of Rome. They were simply more successful in retaining their independence.

The Sabbath Controversy

For 145 years, between 1520 and 1665, Ethiopia was under constant pressure from the Portuguese government and the pope to accept Catholicism. The pope targeted at least two nations in Africa as ideal places to send Catholic missionaries. The kingdom of Kongo in Central Africa received Catholic Missionaries in 1491, one year before Columbus sailed to America. The king of Kongo quickly accepted Christianity and Kongo has maintained Christian churches from that

time to the present. When the king was baptized, his entire court was also baptized, and Christianity became the state religion. The king, however, refused to accept the idea that he or any of his people would be subject to the pope, who in his mind was a foreign leader. Therefore, the Catholic church did not achieve a complete victory in that area. The head of the church in the kingdom of Kongo was the king of Kongo.

By contrast, Christianity had been firmly entrenched in Ethiopia since the third century. The faith of the early church had been maintained and Sabbath keeping was also continued. Even when Sunday worship was introduced centuries later, Sunday was never considered sacred. Sunday observance was Ethiopia's way of acknowledging the traditions of some Christians in other lands.

In the 1630s, a century after the Ethiopian ambassador addressed the court of Lisbon, the pope induced the king of Ethiopia to recognize him as the Vicar of Christ and "swear true obedience." Soon afterward, at the command of the pope, Ethiopia's king issued an edict forbidding the observance of the Sabbath on Saturday. The century between the Ethiopian ambassador's dramatic testimony in defense of Sabbath-keeping and the Ethiopian emperor's edict banning Sabbath-keeping was filled with incidents of bloodshed and controversy that tore the nation apart.

During that century, Portugal had become particularly interested in developing trade with Ethiopia. If you remember your world history, Portugal had become a world maritime power when its explorers and merchants developed a highly profitable trade across the Atlantic Ocean in gold, silver, spices and African slaves. Various popes had made this possible. Pope Nicholas V in 1454 and Pope Calixtus III in 1456 issued papal bulls outlawing the capture and trade in Christian slaves by Catholics. In the same papal bulls they recommended the capture of Africans, and justified enslaving Africans by claiming that this would be an effective way to make them Christians. Nearly forty years later, another pope brokered the treaty of Tordesillas, which gave Portugal a monopoly over trade across the Atlantic from Africa to the Americas.

With their domination of the Atlantic trade assured, the Portuguese now sought to dominate Indian Ocean trade. They knew of the riches of India and China. They had also heard of a mighty king in Africa who ruled over a Christian empire. Their own mythology

had created a king called "Prester John" who allegedly lived in Central Africa. The real Christian kingdom was Ethiopia. Routes to India were under the control of Islam. Therefore, Portugal needed an alliance with Christian Ethiopia to challenge Islam and establish trade routes to India. During the next few years, Portuguese travelers came to Ethiopia and Ethiopian monarchs sent emissaries back to Portugal. Indeed, Ethiopia had its own problems with surrounding Muslim neighbors. And, like Portugal, Ethiopia needed Christian allies.

Portugal had many goals in pursuing a relationship with Ethiopia. One important goal was to convert Ethiopia to Catholicism. According to one writer, the pope himself selected missionaries to run the Portuguese embassy in Ethiopia. One history of Ethiopia notes:

To preach the Roman Catholic faith to the Ethiopians, the Pope appointed Don Francisco Alvarez, Giovanni Fernandez and Pietro Alphonsu Mendez. The king appointed Dom Eduardo Galvam as head of the diplomatic mission. This regular embassy sailed from Portugal to Ethiopia in October 1514 with letters and gifts from the king of Portugal and the Pope of Rome to the queen regent, Helena, and to the young king Lebna Dengel.¹⁴⁸

Elder Bekele Heye, in his 1968 Masters thesis at Andrews University, described the chaplain of the Portuguese embassy in Ethiopia, Don Francisco Alvarez:

Alvarez was a man of remarkable breadth of mind. The first thing he did upon his arrival in Ethiopia was to make friends with the officials of the Ethiopian court, with the bishop and other leading priests, and with the Emperor himself. He told the bishop and the Emperor how he was greatly impressed with the multitude of churches and monasteries. He told the Emperor and the bishop that the Ethiopian churches were more numerous than all those of medieval Europe combined.¹⁴⁹

Once he had gained the confidence of the young emperor and the leading bishop, Alvarez expressed shock over the fact that Ethiopians were not observing Sunday, but had continued to keep the Sabbath on Saturday as indicated in the Bible. Alvarez began a long discussion with Ethiopian clerics about the observance of Sunday. However, it seems that Alvarez was no theologian and had very little knowledge about the history of the early church. He was no match for the native clergy of Ethiopia, who grew suspicious of him. However he was more successful with Lebna Dengal, the boy-king of Ethiopia, who spent many hours learning about Catholicism from Alvarez. It was King Lebna Dengal who is persuaded to recognize the pope as the Vicar of Christ and to issue an edict forbidding Saturday observance.

According to Bekele Heye, the young emperor Lebna Dengal and his regent were determined to "crash the power" of the Moslems so that their Christian nation could prosper and live in peace. The Ottoman Empire had expanded to control the Red Sea area, and Ethiopia was clearly the next target. Not long afterward, the Ottoman forces swept into Ethiopia, destroying churches, and slaughtering or enslaving Christians. Many reportedly renounced their faith in the wake of the invading forces. This crisis made Emperor Dengal even more determined to renounce the Sabbath-keeping leaders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the official church of Ethiopia, in favor of the closest possible alliance with Portugal and the pope. Rather than surrender completely to the forces of Islam, the Ethiopian emperor was willing to make drastic concessions. Finally he sent this message to the Portuguese:

We are willing to subject our faith and our Church to the Holy See at Rome. We are willing to recognize the sovereignty of Portugal over our Empire. We and the peoples of our Empire are willing to become Portuguese and Roman Catholic subjects. To make this effective we have given the bishopric to Bermudez [the Portuguese representative in Ethiopia].¹⁵⁰

When Emperor Lebna Dengal died in 1540, his son, Galawdewos, succeeded him. Although he was only eighteen years of age, the new emperor was able to amass his forces against the Islamic invaders.

With the help of troops sent by the Portuguese, Galawdewos defeated the invading Islamic army.

Emperor Galawdewos soon confronted the Portuguese clergyman, Bermundez, who claimed to be the bishop of Ethiopia due to his appointment to the office by Lebna Dengel, the father of Galawdewos. However, the young emperor rejected the claims of Bermundez and also rejected Rome's authority in Ethiopia. Galawdewos proved to be a very astute theologian during his disputes with the Jesuits sent by the pope to help convert Ethiopians to Catholicism. He used arguments taken from the books of the Catholic faith to dispute the claim that Ethiopia owed allegiance to Rome. In the end, the emperor disavowed any allegiance to the pope. He also issued a "Confession of Faith" supporting the celebration of Sabbath on Saturday.¹⁵¹ Galawdewos, who was also known as Claudius, still needed the Portuguese in his fight to fend off the Moslems. Therefore he proposed a compromise in which he introduced Sunday worship alongside observance of the Sabbath on Saturday. The clergy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church utterly rejected the idea, threatening to excommunicate the emperor. The Portuguese Jesuits were also unhappy, insisting upon Sunday worship only.

Galawdewos died in battle against the invading Islamic forces in 1559. The next Ethiopian emperor, Minas, acted immediately against the Portuguese, banning the practice of Catholicism in Ethiopia, even among the Portuguese soldiers who had come to support the defense of the nation against Islamic invaders. Other emperors after Minas were more tolerant of Catholicism, but still the influence of the Roman church did not take hold. The Ethiopian clergy stood firm, even when a subsequent emperor, Za Dengel, was persuaded to forbid the observance of Sabbath. They denounced him as a heretic and raised an army to defeat him in battle. Soon the emperor was killed by troops of his own nation. Nevertheless, the Portuguese troops sent to enforce the late emperor's edicts still remained in Ethiopia. Years of fighting followed in which thousands died to maintain Ethiopia's independence from Portuguese and Catholic domination.¹⁵²

A later Ethiopian emperor named Susenyos ruled from 1607 to 1632. Just before he assumed the throne, war broke out in Ethiopia

over the Sabbath question. Soon afterward, Susenyos fought his way to power. He then requested more Portuguese troops to help in the defense of the nation. He also employed the Portuguese in the rebuilding of churches throughout the nation. Eventually, Susenyos declared himself to be a Catholic and, in 1622, he issued a nationwide decree to abolish the celebration of the seventh-day Sabbath and establish Sunday worship in its place.

Susenyos asked the pope to send a Catholic patriarch, and the pope chose a Spanish Jesuit named Alphonzo Mendez. The new patriarch went to work right away. He ordered that the nobles be brought together for a ceremony that featured the emperor kneeling before him and swearing allegiance to the pope. Mendez also began an attack against the Sabbath, a top priority on his agenda. His goal was a complete assimilation of the Ethiopian church into the Catholic Church. This meant that all Ethiopian priests were suspended until Mendez, the pope's representatives, could ordain them. A larger political aim was to place Ethiopia under the political control of Spain and Portugal. The Ethiopian people responded with a series of popular rebellions that grew into a civil war lasting eight years.¹⁵³ During the final year of his reign, Emperor Susenyos fell ill and lost his ability to speak. His family apparently believed that he became mute because he had issued a proclamation against Sabbath keeping. The son of the emperor sent letters to Ethiopia's religious leaders and noblemen requesting special prayer for his father. When Susenyos recovered, he withdrew his ban on Sabbath-keeping, proclaiming: "We restore to you the faith of your fathers. Let the former clergy return to the churches. Let them put in their altars, let them say their own liturgy."¹⁵⁴

Faselidas, the son of Susenyos, became emperor in 1632. He blamed the Jesuits for the destruction and chaos that had been the result of decades of religious wars. He announced his plan to expel all of them and remove Roman Catholicism from Ethiopia. He pursued the Jesuits in Ethiopia relentlessly, forcing them to seek refuge with a few sympathizers who eventually sold them to middlemen who resold them to the Spanish government. Then Emperor Faselidas hunted down and executed Ethiopia's remaining Jesuits.¹⁵⁵

Unwilling to abandon attempts to convert Ethiopia, the Roman See sent French priests to Ethiopia. Some were discovered and killed before entering Ethiopia. Emperor Fasilidas had two of them stoned when they succeeded in entering Ethiopia and announced their presence. The rest went home when they heard about the stoning. Finally, Emperor Fasilidas signed a treaty with a neighbor and former Moslem enemy, the Pasha of Suakim, who agreed to kill any priests attempting to enter Ethiopia through their common border. In 1648, the Pasha beheaded two priests who announced that they had arrived from France. And, for the time being at least, attempts to convert Ethiopia to Catholicism and, in the process, to abolish the seventh-day Sabbath, came to an end.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

Sabbath-keeping in Ethiopia encountered two important challenges. The first came from Islam as a part of its widespread conflict with Christianity. The second came from fellow Christians, the Roman See, who sought to revise the traditional faith of Ethiopian Christians. This included the acceptance of Sunday as the appropriate day of worship. The fight to retain Sabbath-keeping occurred within the context of the struggle against Portuguese (and European Catholic) religious, political and cultural domination. The Ethiopian Christians' success in finally expelling the Jesuits and others sent to convert them insured that nation's independence for many years to come. Two later conflicts with Italy, in 1896 and 1935, illustrated the persistence of those who threatened Ethiopia's independence. The fact remains that Ethiopia survived as a symbol of resistance to the rest of the Africa and its diaspora.

Bibliography

Andrews, John Nevins, *History of the Sabbath and first day of the Week, Showing the Bible Record of the Sabbath , Also the Manner in which it has been Supplanted by the Heathen Festival of the Sun* (Battle Creek: The Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1862).

Drake, St. Clair, *Black Folk Here and There, Volume I* (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies, 1981).

Harris, Joseph E. , *African American Reactions to the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

Heye, Bekele, "The Sabbath in Africa (Ethiopia): a 'Provocateur'" (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Andrews University, 1968).

Report of the Commission on the Chicago Riot of 1920, Arno Press and New York Times (reprint), 1969)

Snowden, Frank M., *Blacks in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

Snowden, Frank M., *Before Color Prejudice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

Thornton, John, "Perspectives on African Christianity" in *Perspectives on the African Diaspora, Volume I*, edited by Emory J. Tolbert (Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

Tolbert, Emory, "African American Historians on Africa: Themes from the African Diaspora" in *Perspectives on the African Diaspora, Volume II*, ed. by Emory J. Tolbert (Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

The "Great Controversy" and the Coming of Global Christianity

by

*Douglas Morgan
Department of History
Columbia Union College*

*Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.*

John N. Andrews' seminal exposition of place of the United States in apocalyptic prophecy, set forth in 1851, built on a widely-shared notion about the direction of history, put into verse by in the 18th century by Bishop George Berkeley in "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America." History centered on a westward progression of empires, beginning with Babylon and Persia in the ancient Near East, then proceeding to Greece, then to Rome.¹⁵⁸ Expectation of continued westward progression bolstered Andrews' argument that biblical prophecy itself, in Revelation 13 and 14, foretold the decisive role of the United States at the end of the age. He cited the rapid westward territorial expansion of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century as evidence supporting a geographical, as well as chronological, sequence of the apocalyptic beasts. Now "the great circuit of empire will be accomplished, for the boundary of the vast Pacific has been reached."¹⁵⁸

The “present truth” that Seventh-day Adventists offered America in the second half of the 19th century assumed the structure of this reigning West-centered conception of history—while undercutting its triumphalism: rather than embody the zenith of nobility, time’s last imperial offspring, Protestant America, was betraying its promising guise and would join hands with the papacy for a terrifying and climactic re-incarnation of the old evils of empire. While all forms of Christianity make basic claims about history, Seventh-day Adventists staked the entire meaning of their movement on amplifying such claims and specifying the key actors and time periods involved.

The Adventist church has since grown, and become overwhelmingly non-western in membership despite the Western focus of its “great controversy” storyline. However, that international make-up itself, along with a growing body of scholarship, are prominent among the factors that press upon us, as Adventist historians, the urgency of recasting the church’s western-centered theology of history.

Authors such as Philip Jenkins, Lamin Sanneh, and Andrew Walls¹⁵⁹ have called attention to the implications of the explosive growth of Christianity in Africa, Latin America, and Asia during the 20th century accompanied by relative malaise among the white populations of North America and Western Europe. Coming to terms with the recent southward and eastward trajectories has also prompted new emphasis on the historical importance of centers of Christianity outside the West—in the Middle East, further east in Asia, and in Africa—established centuries prior to Western-based missions.

What are the implications of all of this for the historical vocation in the Adventist community? The work of these scholars convincingly depicts a global panorama of Christianity’s past, present, and future that takes us far beyond that depicted in the pages of *The Great Controversy*. How useful for the 21st century can a charting of history be that has nothing to say about the vast millions of Eastern Orthodoxy or the resurgence and tenacity of Islam, and little about the distinctive features of African Christianity which is rapidly becoming the most representative form of world Christianity?

I should make clear some assumptions behind my raising of these issues and my attempt to address them. In my conception historical scholarship is a vocation within the community of faith. For

that vocation to be fulfilled, critical investigation of history must be pursued in a free and open manner, with hard questions asked and conclusions open to revision according to the evidence. A faith that stakes itself on history must be open to this process.

The choice to participate in the Adventist community also involves doing business with a heritage of belief about the meaning of history. Certain convictions and values orient the task of what to look for and highlight in constructing a meaningful narrative out of the mass of possible evidence. Gary Land, adapting a term from Patrick Gardiner, writes that Christian historians may use “pointers” to guide us “in determining what is important in the historical record and how to understand the human dimension of that record.”¹⁶⁰

The new awareness of the global dimensions of Christian history has implications relevant to both of these assumptions. It challenges us—in varying ways appropriate to our particular roles and specialties—to advance a more satisfactory understanding of the history of Christianity than is conveyed through traditional church sources alone. At the same time, on the level of convictions about the meaning of history, those sources—Ellen White’s writings in particular—encourage, I believe even mandate, vigorous development of a broader global picture than they themselves present. To meet both challenges, we need to re-invigorate and renew historical study of Christianity by bringing to it a global perspective.

Always Under Revision

Twenty-five years ago, Jonathan Butler demonstrated with costly clarity, that the Protestant America to which Ellen White prophesied in *The Great Controversy* had in fact come to an end though the world had not.¹⁶¹ From Ellen White’s standpoint, the Western progression of history had reached its endpoint in an America that represented the last, best hope of free government and religious liberty for the entire world. Ecumenical leader Josiah Strong, as a leading voice of the Protestant establishment, hoped that America would indeed lead the world to a millennial liberty, and do so by invigorating the Anglo-Saxon race, as the representative of “the purest Christianity,” to “dispossess many weaker ones, assimilate others, and mold the remainder.”¹⁶² Ellen White, however, saw the American millennial project turning repressive, particularly through Sabbath legislation

—an issue reflecting decidedly Anglo-American obsessions. Sunday observance was a prominent issue for the champions, like Strong, of Protestant empire in America. At the same time Britain stood at the head of the European empires racing in full gear for global power. In that setting, a somewhat parochial struggle between the heirs of the Puritans could plausibly have international implications.

By 1979 pluralist America had thoroughly displaced Protestant America, and though a new Christian Right was emerging, Sunday laws failed to surface in its endeavors to reverse the tide. Furthermore, momentous changes on the international scene since then have in many ways led us further from Ellen White's world. Most obvious here is the resurgence of Islam as a potent geo-political force. The massive southward shift in world Christianity's center of gravity has brought about unforeseen developments that go well beyond demographics. It has brought to center stage issues not found in *The Great Controversy* plot such as the equitable distribution of global resources and multi-faceted dilemmas involving gender and sexuality. Moreover, the indigenous and Pentecostal-style movements that in no small degree powered the shift appear to be creating an entirely new type of Christianity outside the Protestant-Catholic categories familiar to Ellen White.¹⁶³

The credibility of talk about beasts and images, about history in the light of prophecy and the time of trouble, diminishes if it does not take into account these developments. Precisely because Adventism stands on a theology of history—"the great controversy"—as the structure in which all of the church's central teachings find their full meaning, it opens itself to the ongoing pursuit of historical understanding. Adventist historians have the responsibility and right to be resources for advancing that understanding, which entails correcting and showing the limitations of previous understandings.

The Great Controversy might be described as an extended sermon about the meaning and ultimate direction of history. It spoke the prophetic word to its times, using the work of historians to develop and illustrate its basic theological claims. As times change, as new knowledge comes, the illustrations change and the outline may be restructured. The process can be seen the course of Ellen White's own career, not least in the production and revision of *The Great Controversy*. Adventist scholars functioned in varying ways as sources, filters, and

advisors for Ellen White's appropriation of historical material.¹⁶⁴ Thus, one implication of the dramatic changes in the shape of world Christianity may simply be a reminder that we need to be for the church today what J.N. Andrews, W.W. Prescott and others were for Ellen White.

Always Orienting

My sense, however, is that the limitations of Ellen White's writings about history is no longer a very controversial or engrossing theme for Adventist historians. No longer tightly constricted by those writings, I wonder if we pay much attention to them at all in connection with how we do history. So, my greater concern is to argue taking Ellen White's perspective on history more seriously would stimulate open if critical engagement with the new global emphasis. Such engagement would also re-vitalize study and teaching of the history of Christianity in ways that could, in turn, help the church toward wise and deeper faithfulness.

While my focus here is primarily on broad themes of meaning and purpose in history, there is at least one specific historical example that demands attention. In *The Great Controversy* (575-78, 1888 ed.), Ellen White devotes to the indigenous Christianity of sub-Saharan Africa nearly half of a three-page section on historical examples of resistance to papal oppression over the Sabbath. Though stimulated by visitors from the eastern Roman empire who were dissenters from Byzantine orthodoxy, the churches of Ethiopia and Nubia developed and sustained over a period of centuries distinctive African expressions of Christianity, independent of foreign control.¹⁶⁵ Sabbath observance was a central point of contention in the Portuguese-led attempt in the 16th and 17th centuries to bring Ethiopia into the Roman communion. In the end, the Ethiopians succeeded in expelling the Portuguese and preserving an identity that included seventh-day Sabbath observance among its markers.¹⁶⁶ Lest readers hasten too quickly by the story of "Central Africa," Ellen White pauses to underscore its claim on the reader's attention: "The history of the churches of Ethiopia and Abyssinia is especially important."

It was Charles E. Bradford's *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection* (1999) that for me rescued this passage from faded memory. Why did I forget about this segment on Africa, when so much else in *The Great*

Controversy stayed familiar? Was it just me—a failure of memory or discipline in re-reading *The Conflict of the Ages* series as often as I should? Or could it have something to do with the fact that there were no exciting, serialized stories about this in the *Junior Guide* or alluring books on display at camp meeting, as there were about the Waldensians, Luther, Tyndale, and the Huguenots? Or that I never heard it mentioned in a sermon or quoted in a Sabbath School lesson? However that may be, this relatively neglected vignette from Ellen White herself reminds us that Africa plays a major part in “the great controversy,” and not just as an extension of Western mission but rather in some ways despite it.

Consider also the current scene: approximately 360 million Christians in Africa; over 600 million projected by 2025. Add to that the millions in the African diaspora—from Rio de Janeiro, to Kingston, to New York, Toronto, London, and points between and beyond. Thus, the modern surge and spread of African Christianity, along with its legacy from centuries past, make an overwhelming case for regarding Africa as a major historic center of Christianity.¹⁶⁷ Not only that, but a center in its own right, not a satellite of some greater center.

While Ellen White’s reference to Africa helps my case, better adherence to the particulars of her historical outline is not my point. Rather, I want to hold up a key principle in Ellen White’s “great controversy” theme, and propose that it challenges us to discover and make coherent a global narrative for Christian history that would look quite different in proportion and detail from the picture that she herself developed in *The Great Controversy*.

While another nineteenth-century interpreter of history saw “class struggle” as the central dynamic of history, for Ellen White it was “moral struggle” in the public arena. The primary agents of creative change in history, the decisive actors in moving the drama forward, are not ruling elites, military conquerors, or accumulators of wealth, but nonconformists from the margins—the prophetic minorities that risks confronting the powers on the basis of principle rather than expedience or self-interest. In her estimation the foremost champions in the “record of human progress” are not emperors, generals, or presidents but those who “have withstood the power of the whole world” armed only with the word of God.

The Vaudois and the Huguenots, Wycliffe and Huss, Jerome and Luther, Tyndale and Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, with multitudes of others, have witnessed to the power of God's word against human power and policy in support of evil. These are the world's true nobility. This is its royal line.¹⁶⁸

Consequently, history "considered from the divine point of view" looks beyond the struggles for military conquest and political domination in order to emphasize "the history of the great reformatory movements." Such study would reveal a frequent pattern: though the principles of reform movements often are "despised and hated" and "their advocates brought to the dungeon and the scaffold," they triumph "through these very sacrifices." Pursuit of history from this perspective would also highlight global interconnectedness, showing "how wonderfully we are bound together in the great brotherhood of society and nations, and to how great an extent the oppression or degradation of one member means loss to all."¹⁶⁹

It seems to me that two lines of thought intertwine here in giving impetus to a multicentered, global structuring of the history of Christianity. First, being on the lookout for prophetic minorities will lead us to probe further beyond the centers of power both within and outside the geographical borders of ancient imperial Rome and the modern imperial West. The prolific church historian Justo L. Gonzalez has recently described the "vision of the church from which today I write and interpret the history of the church" as "incarnate marginality." Without ignoring the value and importance of what has happened at the centers of power, writes Gonzalez, "we must affirm that the proper place for those who follow Jesus Christ is the margin rather than the center; it is the valley rather than the hilltop; it is the cross rather than the throne."¹⁷⁰

Second, the values of inclusiveness and equal dignity embedded the concept of being "bound together in the great brotherhood of society and nations" demand that we tell the story in ways that reflect its truly global scope, and no longer allow elitism or parochialism narrow it.

Some Examples

Tracing the eastward, not just the westward, trajectory of the early Christian movement would lead us to the Persian empire where, during the fourth century, 16,000 Christians were put to death for their faith. That's probably more martyrs than all those executed by Roman emperors combined, certainly more than the number for which there is direct evidence.¹⁷¹ Among the Persian faithful was Martha, a "daughter of the covenant"—one who took a vow of celibacy on behalf of Christ. She was apprehended in the midst of a worship service in 341 and ordered to submit to Emperor Shapur, "the shah of shahs." Her response was to pray for the shah's well-being while declaring her trust to be "in Jesus Christ as the true king of kings who would soon return for her, one of his betrothed."¹⁷²

The Persian (or East Syrian) church, nurtured by its great theological school in Edessa (later Nsibis), would later dissent from the Council of Chalcedon's definition of the nature of Christ that was embraced by imperial authority in Constantinople (as well as in the West). Keeping the Persian Christian, or Nestorian, experience as part of the main story line, rather than quickly letting it drop from sight as an offshoot from orthodoxy, would reward us with a much fuller picture of Christian interaction with the cultures and empires of the East. The two-day dialogue between Timothy, patriarch of Baghdad, and the Abbasid caliph Mahdi in the eighth century, for example, would be a constructive historical memory to nourish in today's world.¹⁷³

Another cohort of dissenters from Byzantine orthodoxy—the so-called monophysite churches—has also frequently been relegated to second or third-class status. Making this family of churches, which came to include Armenian, West Syrian (Jacobite), Coptic, Ethiopian, and Nubian integral to Christian history would be enriching for several reasons. For example, the impressive growth of the Jacobite church in the sixth century suggests the value of a less hierarchical church organization, and keeping an identity free from blurring with imperial authority. The so-called Nine Saints, who fled Syria to escape persecution from the Christian emperor in Constantinople in the late fifth century, landed in Ethiopia where they had a crucial role in extending and deepening the influence of Christianity throughout the countryside.¹⁷⁴

Consideration of the Ethiopian church together with the Nubian (its existence recovered to history in recent decades through archaeology) and the Coptic in Egypt brings to light a major southward trajectory of Christianity during its first millennium. Africa, and far more of it than Roman North Africa, thus early on became a major center of the faith. It has a foundational and distinctive legacy for the history of Christianity that must not be minimized or subsumed under that of Europe.

We have already noted how Africa has re-emerged to central importance in the Christian saga within the past century. Coming to terms with this reality requires more than “doing the math.” It requires attention to the ways Christianity flourishes in modern Africa because of Africans who “witnessed to the power of God’s word against human power and policy in support of evil.” That witness entailed disentangling the truths of the gospel from its packaging with European culture and imperial subjugation, and embodying the Christian message in the forms and flavors of African culture. Forms of Christianity not mediated through Europe, it must be reiterated, were already part of that cultural heritage, along with pagan and Islamic influences.

Independent or African-initiated movements (AIC)—what Lamin Sanneh calls “the signature tune of African Christianity”—powered the explosive growth of African Christianity in the twentieth century to a critical extent. Led by prophetic figures such as William Wade Harris, Garrick Braide, Simon Kimbangu, and Isaiah Shembe, the AIC used “dreams, prayer, prophecy, and healing to institute reforms in music, regalia, liturgy, and pastoral counseling, and so to minister to their throngs of converts.”¹⁷⁵

Andrew Walls characterizes the AIC as the “Anabaptists of Africa” for their “wild variety,” their “strong cohesion as ‘people of God,’” and their “radical biblicalism.” That eclectic fusion of radical biblicalism with African tradition as sometime seen, for example, in the use of Levitical ritual and purity laws, of course raises serious questions.¹⁷⁶ So did the fusion of Christianity with the Roman imperial cult, Neoplatonic philosophy, and the militaristic culture of the European tribes that created Western civilization.

Lamin Sanneh contends that the AIC carried out the necessary divesting the Christianity that had become “a sub-plot of European maritime expansion that fueled slavery and colonialism” from its

excessive "Western cultural and political baggage," thus preparing it to be "drilled by culturally charged forces into its Gentile African pivot."

The formation of a distinctly African Christian identity thus came about through the transition from a territorial, scholastic church of the medieval period to evangelical, disestablishmentarian forms of religion; from the concordat approach to mission to Independency and personal lay agency; and from metropolitan *assimilados* to vernacular translation and rural empowerment.¹⁷⁷

Giving African agency its due centrality in the story of African Christianity rather than viewing it solely through the lens of the Western missionary enterprise is an instance of placing the history of Christianity, in Sanneh's words, "squarely where it belongs: within the unfolding narrative of humanity's struggle for freedom, justice, and equality."¹⁷⁸

My examples have tilted toward Africa. The point, however, is not that Africa should now be regarded as the single, dominant center of Christian history. To illustrate the multiple centers, we might, for example, look at the flourishing of Christianity in South Korea as part of an identity resistant both to Japanese and communism rule, as well as to Western missionary dominance; or to Latin America as the source of liberation theology. While their vitality, influence, and relationships to other centers shift over time, each center draws on a historical legacy in which people have embraced and shaped Christianity on their own cultural terms, and each has ongoing importance for the overall story.¹⁷⁹

Increasing awareness of the global, multi-centered character of the world Christian movement and its past gives us a substantially different view of history and its culmination than Ellen White and the other Adventist pioneers formulated over a century ago, filled with peoples and powers and even epochs unfamiliar to them. More significant, though, "the great controversy," as a theology of history centering on prophetic minorities and the full human dignity of all peoples, points toward the urgency of interpreting Christianity in the global framework. Such study would enrich the identity of a people wanting to see Christianity at its best lived out in a global fellowship

in which the antagonisms that alienate social classes, nations, races, and ethnic groups healed by the gospel. It should also empower such people to counter with prophetic witness the forces working for globalization on other terms, in which the many struggle for bare survival while the few grasp luxuries secured, after all, by the global military reach of an empire at the end of the westward progression.

APPENDIX

A Wake Up Call

by

Dr. Roy Adams

"After a long time in Africa, and a lot of time elsewhere in the Southern parts of the world, I am convinced that there is such a mighty fissure growing within Christianity that will cause such huge mutations that our liberal Northern version of the faith will simply disappear."

The date was April 20; the setting, a hotel in downtown Toronto, site of the 2004 annual convention of the Associated Church Press, a society that brings together editors and other communication professionals from a wide range of Christian denominations. And the luncheon keynoter uttering those startling words was Hugh McCullum, a journalist recently returned to Canada after 13 years in Africa. Perhaps like all the others gathered for the occasion, I'd been expecting the typical after-dinner address—educated, informative, but nothing to write home about.

Instead, a bombshell.

We are living at a time "as epochal as the Reformation of 500 years ago," McCullum declared. The whole of Christendom is changing, "growing and mutating in ways that Northern observers have failed to see." In the coming years it will be Christianity (and not Islam) that will be the force to reckon with in the world. *But it will be a new Christianity—Southern Christianity.*

It wasn't as if we'd never heard sentiments like those before. But there was a starkness about the way McCullum presented them—

an urgency. There's a crisis coming, he seemed to say—a spiritual showdown, if you please, in which Southern Christianity comes into its own, no longer taking its marching orders from its older, worldly sibling in the North. The belief among liberal Christians in the North, he said, is that much of the current tension in the church “derives from archaic and primitive beliefs about homosexuality, women and a more generalized fear of sexuality. In this view, widely held in secular, materialistic North America and Western Europe, anyone should be able to see *that the idea that God, the creator and lord of the universe, is concerned about sexuality is on its way out.*”

It's not easy in 750 words to give you a proper feel for the actual situation of the 35-minute speech, but the following extended quote perhaps gets to the heart McCullum's message:

“If we look beyond the liberal West ... , largely still without the saving grace of technology, we find ... [a] very different Christianity from that one called for in affluent suburbs and upscale urban parishes. We find a church that is highly supernatural, ultra-orthodox and inclined to see Jesus as the embodiment of divine power who overcomes the evil forces that inflict calamity and sickness on the human race. In the global South—the part we used to call the Third World—there are huge and growing Christian populations—more than 500 million in Latin America, nearly 400 million in Africa and nearly 325 million in Asia, compared with a rapidly declining 215 million in North America. Some scholars are beginning to call it the Third Church, a form of Christianity far more distinct than Roman Catholicism is from Protestantism or Orthodox. The revolution, for that is what it is, taking place in Africa, Asia and Latin America is far more sweeping than any current liberal shifts in North America, be they Catholic, Anglican or Protestant. No matter what the terminology, however, an enormous rift seems inevitable, far greater than the first reformation which changed forever the face of Europe in the 16th century.”

I don't have with agree to everything, but I pay attention to people from the front lines. “The changes that liberal reformers are trying to inspire today in North America and Europe,” McCullum said—changes they see as “essential if Christianity is to be preserved as a modern relevant force”—such changes “run utterly contrary to the dominant cultural movements in the rest of the Christian world.”

Not many of us knew exactly what to make of the speech; and in conversation after conversation following the presentation, just about everyone I talked to seemed keen on beating me to the first question: "What did you think?" Like me, they were struggling to know what all McCullum meant, the implications of what he said, and where we go from here.

This much seems clear: the entire global ground is shifting; something big is happening in our times; and we must grapple with whether or not God's behind it. If we conclude He is, then we must use our theological conservatism and global reach to seize the moment.

The Sabbath

by

Ellen G. White

The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. Peace brooded over the world; for earth was in harmony with heaven. "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good;" and He rested in the joy of His completed work. Gen. 1:31.

Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,"--set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God's power and His love. The Scripture says, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered." "The things that are made," declare "the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world," "even His everlasting power and divinity." Gen. 2:3; Ps. 111:4; Rom. 1:20, R. V.

All things were created by the Son of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1: 1-3. And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.

The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul. He "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6.

It was this thought that awoke the song,

"Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work;

I will triumph in the works of Thy hands.

O Lord, how great are Thy works!

And Thy thoughts are very deep." Ps. 92:4, 5.

And the Holy Spirit through the prophet Isaiah declares: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? ... Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. ... To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? ... He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." This is the message written in nature, which the Sabbath is appointed to keep in memory. When the Lord bade Israel hallow His Sabbaths, He said, "They shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God." Isa. 40:18-29; 41:10; 45:22; Ezek. 20:20, R. V. {DA 282.2}

The Sabbath was embodied in the law given from Sinai; but it was not then first made known as a day of rest. The people of Israel had a knowledge of it before they came to Sinai. On the way thither the Sabbath was kept. When some profaned it, the Lord reproved them, saying, "How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?" Ex. 16:28. {DA 283.1}

The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law." So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. "From one Sabbath to another" the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up "to worship before Me, saith the Lord." Matt. 5:18; Isa. 66:23.

No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshippers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," the Lord said also to them, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me." Ex. 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshippers of God.

As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God's rest day with burdensome requirements. In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hard-hearted and cruel. It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.

Upon one Sabbath day, as the Saviour and His disciples returned from the place of worship, they passed through a field of ripening grain. Jesus had continued His work to a late hour, and while passing through the fields, the disciples began to gather the heads of grain, and to eat the kernels after rubbing them in their hands. On any other day this act would have excited no comment, for one passing through a field of grain, an orchard, or a vineyard, was at liberty to gather what he desired to eat. See Deut. 23:24, 25. But to do this on the Sabbath was held to be an act of desecration. Not only was the gathering of the grain a kind of reaping, but the rubbing of it in the hands was a kind of threshing. Thus, in the opinion of the rabbis, there was a double offense.

The spies at once complained to Jesus, saying, "Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day."

When accused of Sabbathbreaking at Bethesda, Jesus defended Himself by affirming His Sonship to God, and declaring that He worked in harmony with the Father. Now that the disciples are attacked, He cites His accusers to examples from the Old Testament, acts performed on the Sabbath by those who were in the service of God.

The Jewish teachers prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the Saviour's answer there was an implied rebuke for their ignorance of the Sacred Writings. "Have ye not read so much as this," He said, "what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, . . . which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?" "And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Luke 6:3, 4; Mark 2:27, 28; Matt. 12:5, 6.

If it was right for David to satisfy his hunger by eating of the bread that had been set apart to a holy use, then it was right for the disciples to supply their need by plucking the grain upon the sacred hours of the Sabbath. Again, the priests in the temple performed greater labor on the Sabbath than upon other days. The same labor in secular business would be sinful; but the work of the priests was in the service of God. They were performing those rites that pointed to the redeeming power of Christ, and their labor was in harmony with the

object of the Sabbath. But now Christ Himself had come. The disciples, in doing the work of Christ, were engaged in God's service, and that which was necessary for the accomplishment of this work it was right to do on the Sabbath day.

Christ would teach His disciples and His enemies that the service of God is first of all. The object of God's work in this world is the redemption of man; therefore that which is necessary to be done on the Sabbath in the accomplishment of this work is in accord with the Sabbath law. Jesus then crowned His argument by declaring Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath,"—One above all question and above all law. This infinite Judge acquits the disciples of blame, appealing to the very statutes they are accused of violating.

Jesus did not let the matter pass with administering a rebuke to His enemies. He declared that in their blindness they had mistaken the object of the Sabbath. He said, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." Matt. 12:7. Their many heartless rites could not supply the lack of that truthful integrity and tender love which will ever characterize the true worshiper of God.

Again Christ reiterated the truth that the sacrifices were in themselves of no value. They were a means, and not an end. Their object was to direct men to the Saviour, and thus to bring them into harmony with God. It is the service of love that God values. When this is lacking, the mere round of ceremony is an offense to Him. So with the Sabbath. It was designed to bring men into communion with God; but when the mind was absorbed with wearisome rites, the object of the Sabbath was thwarted. Its mere outward observance was a mockery.

Upon another Sabbath, as Jesus entered a synagogue. He saw there a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees watched Him, eager to see what He would do. The Saviour well knew that in healing on the Sabbath He would be regarded as a transgressor, but He did not hesitate to break down the wall of traditional requirements that barricaded the Sabbath. Jesus bade the afflicted man stand forth, and then asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" It was a maxim among the Jews that a failure to do good, when one had opportunity, was to do evil; to neglect to save life was to kill. Thus Jesus met the rabbis on their own ground. "But

they held their peace. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." Mark 3:4, 5.

When questioned, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" Jesus answered, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Matt. 12:10-12.

The spies dared not answer Christ in the presence of the multitude, for fear of involving themselves in difficulty. They knew that He had spoken the truth. Rather than violate their traditions, they would leave a man to suffer, while they would relieve a brute because of the loss to the owner if it were neglected. Thus greater care was shown for a dumb animal than for man, who is made in the image of God. This illustrates the working of all false religions. They originate in man's desire to exalt himself above God, but they result in degrading man below the brute. Every religion that wars against the sovereignty of God defrauds man of the glory which was his at the creation, and which is to be restored to him in Christ. Every false religion teaches its adherents to be careless of human needs, sufferings, and rights. The gospel places a high value upon humanity as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and it teaches a tender regard for the wants and woes of man. The Lord says, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isa. 13:12.

When Jesus turned upon the Pharisees with the question whether it was lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill, He confronted them with their own wicked purposes. They were hunting His life with bitter hatred, while He was saving life and bringing happiness to multitudes. Was it better to slay upon the Sabbath, as they were planning to do, than to heal the afflicted, as He had done? Was it more righteous to have murder in the heart upon God's holy day than love to all men, which finds expression in deeds of mercy?

In the healing of the withered hand, Jesus condemned the custom of the Jews, and left the fourth commandment standing as God had given it. "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days," He declared. By sweeping away the senseless restrictions of the Jews, Christ honored

the Sabbath, while those who complained of Him were dishonoring God's holy day.

Those who hold that Christ abolished the law teach that He broke the Sabbath and justified His disciples in doing the same. Thus they are really taking the same ground as did the caviling Jews. In this they contradict the testimony of Christ Himself, who declared, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10. Neither the Saviour nor His followers broke the law of the Sabbath. Christ was a living representative of the law. No violation of its holy precepts was found in His life. Looking upon a nation of witnesses who were seeking occasion to condemn Him, He could say unchallenged, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" John 8:46, R. V.

The Saviour had not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. All the truths of God's word came from Him. But these priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth. This work only a divine hand could accomplish. By its connection with error, the truth had been serving the cause of the enemy of God and man. Christ had come to place it where it would glorify God, and work the salvation of humanity.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," Jesus said. The institutions that God has established are for the benefit of mankind. "All things are for your sakes." "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 2 Cor. 4:15; 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. The law of Ten Commandments, of which the Sabbath forms a part, God gave to His people as a blessing. "The Lord commanded us," said Moses, "to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive." Deut. 6:24. And through the psalmist the message was given to Israel, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." Ps. 100:2-4. And of all who keep "the Sabbath from polluting it," the Lord declares, "Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make

them joyful in My house of prayer." Isa. 56:6, 7.

"Wherefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath. By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. It declares that He who created all things in heaven and in earth, and by whom all things hold together, is the head of the church, and that by His power we are reconciled to God. For, speaking of Israel, He said, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them,"—make them holy. Ezek. 20:12. Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power, the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God.

And the Lord says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Isa. 58:13, 14. To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matt 11:28.

Reference : *The Desires of Ages* by Ellen G. White

Endnotes

Acts 1:8: Where on Earth Is the End of the Earth?

- ¹ Wiersbe, W. W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"—Jkt. Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, 1996).
- ² Bertram L. Melbourne, *Slow to Understand: The Disciples in Synoptic Perspective* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 170-173.
- ³ *Expository Times* 89 (1977-78), pp. 374-375.
- ⁴ See p. 374. Valrood and Zuck suggest that, "Probably "the ends (sing., end in the Gr. text) of the earth" looks to Rome, the proud center of world civilization in the Apostolic Age, a significant distance from Jerusalem (more than 1,400 miles, as the crow flies), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996).
- ⁵ *Ibid.* See also W. C. van Unnik, Der Ausdruck "heōs tou eschatou tēs gēs" postelgeschichte 1:8) und sein alttestamentlichen Hintergrund in *Studia Biblica et Semitica Theodoro Christiano Vriezen Dedicata* (H. Veenman en Zoren, Wageningen [1966], pp. 335-349. While that may not be the precise position of van Unnik, it is for P. Pokorny who according to Brian M. Rapske, takes the position in "Die Romfahrt des Paulus und der antike Roman," ZNK 64 (1973), 233-44 that Paul's voyage to Rome is really the fulfillment of Acts 1:8. See "Acts, Travel and Shipwreck," in David W. J. Gill, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting'* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 45.
- ⁶ See David W. Pao, *Isaiah and the Hermeneutical Framework of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) who not only sees implications for this passage but for the book of Acts as a whole.
- ⁷ Thornton, p. 374
- ⁸ *Ibid.* Compare Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), p. 13.
- ⁹ Thornton, pp.374-375 and nn. 5-6.
- ¹⁰ For a similar view see Christopher Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist: Configurations of a Tradition* (Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 36-37 and 74. He sees 1:8 as an outline for Christian missions.
- ¹¹ Thornton, p. 374.
- ¹² Pao, p. 91 who contends that "the programmatic nature of Acts 1:8 is recognized by most. Acts 1:8 is considered as providing the 'groundplan' for the narrative of Acts." See his list of scholars holding a similar view.

- ¹³ Pao lists Cadbury and Thornton as proponents of such a view that regards Ethiopia as the end of the earth. Pao, p. 93. Note also is listing of other views and their advocates.
- ¹⁴ Note Pao's list of other countries that have been named by scholars as well as his bibliographic references as listed on p. 93.
- ¹⁵ C. H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), p. 27. Compare Luke T Johnson who sees "programmatically prophecy in Luke's design. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series Vol. 5 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), p.12.
- ¹⁶ Pao, p. 85.
- ¹⁷ See Johnson, p. 26 for a listing of some ancient authors who used this phrase in reference to Ethiopia. A modern scholar who holds this view is Hengel. See *Acts and the History of the Earliest Christianity*, trans. by Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) where he states that, "In ancient geography, Ethiopia was the extreme boundary of the habitable world in the hot south," p. 80.
- ¹⁸ H.-G. Link, s.v. "eschto," *NIDNTT* 2:55.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, Compare Demostines, Ep. 4,7; Xenophon, Vect. 1,6; and Theocritus, 15:18 whom Link cites for support. Note also the sources Luke T. Johnson cites that are referenced in footnote 12.
- ²¹ Arndt and Gingrich, s.v. "gē," p. 156. Some may be inclined to restrict the meaning of gē in Acts 1:8 to "land." This would not be valid for the word is neither restricted in usage or in meaning. Besides, it is frequently used in the LXX for the Hebrew 'eres which has "earth" and "world" in its range of meanings as well. See Victor P. Hamilton, s.v. "'eres," *TWOT* 1:74.
- ²² This seems to be the way Dio Chrysostom used the phrase in *Oration* 13:9. See Johnson, pp. 26-27.
- ²³ Thornton, p. 374
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 375 n. 4. Pao agrees noting that 4 of the 5 times that the phrase appears in the LXX occur in Isaiah. He says the fifth reference occurs in Psalms of Solomon 1:4. See *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, p. 85.
- ²⁵ Compare *NIDNTT* 2:55
- ²⁶ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp.20-24, and 36-45.
- ²⁷ Thornton, p. 374.

- ²⁸ See James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 2:640-641.
- ²⁹ See *Psalms of Solomon* 8:16. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text With Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1976), p. 71 and Pao, p. 86.
- ³⁰ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973), 7:234.
- ³¹ See Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4
- ³² Note that Luke says there were representatives from every nation under heaven in Jerusalem at the time. Presumably they were there for the Passover. Moreover, the clear implication of Acts 2:8-11 is that representatives from both near and distant lands were present at Pentecost.
- ³³ Not only would James M. Scott agree with this conclusion, he would contend that there is a distinct parallel between the countries listed here and the table of nations in Gen 10 and in other OT books and Jewish writings. See his "Luke's Geographical Horizon" in David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, ed., *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting, The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, vol.2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 483-544. He advances the thesis that since Acts 2 has been influenced by the table of nations then the whole book indeed has the influence and as such this view holds the key to an adequate understanding of the arrangement of the book around Acts 1:8. For him the key for understanding centers on the arrangement of the table of nations around the three sons of Noah.
- ³⁴ For a similar perspective see Luke T Johnson, *The Writing of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 1986; Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 117-119; *Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 549-50; Paul J. Achtemeier, General ed., *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 10, among others. Compare Scott who in his interpretation sees chapters 1 through 8:25 demonstrating the movement of the gospel among the descendants of Shem. For him the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch illustrates the gospel among the descendants of Ham while the rest of the book of Acts features the movement of the gospel to the descendants of Japheth. While this notion is novel and needs further study, it has some serious problems that will be discussed as we proceed.

- ³⁵ For a similar view, see Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 135-136. See also Idem., *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 157.
- ³⁶ Luke notes that the Apostles were exempted from the persecution (v. 1). See *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- ³⁷ Acts 7:58-8:1.
- ³⁸ Acts 8:1.
- ³⁹ Acts 8:4.
- ⁴⁰ Compare Christopher Matthews, p. 36-37 and 74 who agree that these are illustrations.
- ⁴¹ For the implications, see Bertram Melbourne, *Slow to Understand: the disciples in Synoptic Perspective* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).
- ⁴² Acts 8:9-25.
- ⁴³ Howard Clark Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), p. 75.
- ⁴⁴ Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, M.A.: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 293.
- ⁴⁵ See Deut 23:1-9. Compare John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2001), pp. 223-224.
- ⁴⁶ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 155. See also Howard Kee, p. 110.
- ⁴⁷ See Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), p. 17.
- ⁴⁸ *Acts*, pp. 223-224. His view, however, is that the Ethiopian was a physical Eunuch.
- ⁴⁹ See Cain Hope Felder, gen. ed. *The Original African American Study Bible with Special Annotations Relative to the African/Edenic Perspective* (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Co., 1993), p. 1587.
- ⁵⁰ See Johannes Schneider, s.v. "eunouchos," Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964) 2:766. For a similar view see also Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), p. 310.
- ⁵¹ He tells of Simon of Cyrene who assisted Jesus in carrying his cross. He also mentions the Blacks that constituted two thirds of the leadership core of the church at Antioch—Simeon Niger and Lucius of Cyrene (see Acts 13:1). Kee notes that the linking of someone whose name "Niger" meaning "black" with someone from Cyrene clearly implies that both of them are from Africa. See Kee, p. 159.

- ⁵² Scott, p. 534. See also Johnson, p. 154.
- ⁵³ *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, p. 1578.
- ⁵⁴ *To Every Nation Under heaven*, p. 110.
- ⁵⁵ *Acts*, p.223.
- ⁵⁶ See Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), pp. 360-361.
- ⁵⁷ *Acts* 8:26-39.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁹ See Luke T. Johnson, p. 166 who views this conversion as "one of the most stunning and inexplicable turnabouts."
- ⁶⁰ So Scott renders it. "Luke's Geographic Horizon," p. 539; cf. Luke T. Johnson, p. 165 & p. 241.
- ⁶¹ *Acts* 9:15
- ⁶² The Eunuch may have been a Jew from Ethiopia, a proselyte or at least a God Fearer since he was coming from worship at Jerusalem. See I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 162. Compare Felder who calls him an Ethiopian God-fearer, *Troubling Biblical Waters*, p. 13. While noting these possibilities, Gifford Rhamie states his preference for calling him a Jew because of the "burgeoning data of the historical records of Ethiopia." An unpublished paper, "The Ethiopian Eunuch, Ethics and missions," presented to the ASRS in Atlanta on November 21, 2003. For the contrary view, see Matthews, who specifically calls him an "Ethiopian gentile" on p. 71 but a proselyte on pp. 80-81.
- ⁶³ Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth*, p. 75.
- ⁶⁴ Kee, p. 157.
- ⁶⁵ Scott, p. 546.
- ⁶⁶ *To Every Nation Under Heaven*, p. 169.
- ⁶⁷ *Acts*, p. 308. See also Luke Johnson, p. 242. Pao agrees with this link but notes that there is a link with Luke 24:47 that has its roots in Isaiah 49:6. See *Acts and the Isaianic Exodus*, p. 86.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 307.
- ⁶⁹ For a list of those who hold this position see Pao, p. 93.
- ⁷⁰ See Rom 1:15; 15:24-26. See also *Acts* 19:21.
- ⁷¹ *Acts* 23:11 (The Berkley Version).
- ⁷² See *TDNT* 2:21-25.

⁷³ See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31, who not only confirms this position but presents another possibility as well. Compare Steve Walton, "The State They were in: Luke's View of the Roman Empire" in Peter Oakes, ed., *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), pp. 28-29 He thinks telling of the ultimate death of Paul would have defeated Luke's purpose in writing by presenting the empire in a bad light.

⁷⁴ Keener, C. S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove, Ill, InterVarsity Press, 1993).

Acts 1:8 and the Gospel in Africa

⁷⁵ The foregoing is derived from the information I gleaned from both the oral and the written class presentations of my students.

⁷⁶ Bertram Melbourne, What's the Sign: A 21st Century Look at the Infancy Narratives of Jesus. Presently being copy edited for publication.

⁷⁷ See Hosea 11:1; Compare Matthew 2:15.

⁷⁸ Matthew 3:17

⁷⁹ There is a tradition that sees Jesus' death as his exodus. See Luke 9:31 in the Greek Bible.

⁸⁰ See The Bible Knowledge Commentary on Matt 2:13-15.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), p. 17.

⁸³ Acts 2:10

⁸⁴ Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), p. 26.

⁸⁵ Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 9

⁸⁶ Shaw, p.26

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 22

⁸⁹ See Matt 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26

⁹⁰ See the notes in *The Original African Heritage Bible*, pp. 1341, 1468 & 1525.

⁹¹ Acts 6:9.

⁹² Acts 11:19-20

⁹³ Acts 13:1. Kee thinks the nature of the citation definitely marks him as an African. See Kee, *To Every Nation under heaven*, p. 159.

- ⁹⁴ See his comments on the passage in the Original African Heritage Study Bible, p. 1587.
- ⁹⁵ Charles Bradford, *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection* (Silver Spring: The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999), pp. pp. 89-92. See also Isichei, p. 17.
- ⁹⁶ See Bradford, Shaw and Sundkler.
- ⁹⁷ Bradford, p. 95
- ⁹⁸ Shaw, pp. 75-76 & 92.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bekele Haye, *The Sabbath in Ethiopia* (Lincoln: The Center for Creative Ministry, 2003), pp. 51-62.
- ¹⁰¹ Howard Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1997), p. 159; John Polhill, *Acts. The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2001), p. 289.
- ¹⁰² Luke Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles. Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 220.
- ¹⁰³ Felder, p. 1594.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: The United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 466.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶ *Kingdom of God in Africa*, p. 26
- ¹⁰⁷ Shaw, p. 26. See also Isichei, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁸ Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 109 notes that he is from Alexandria. Other sources say they called him the Black dwarf [see Justo L. Gonzales, *The History of Christianity, Vol. 1: The Early Church and the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1984), pp.173-174 and *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion* s.v. "Bible," (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986)] and the NT canon we use today first appeared in his Easter Letter. See *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion* s.v. "Athanasius."
- ¹⁰⁹ Sundkler, pp. 11-17; Shaw, 27-34.
- ¹¹⁰ Shaw, p. 43
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.44-55
- ¹¹⁴ J. A. Rogers, *100 Amazing Facts about the Negro With Complete*

- Proof: A Short Cut to the World History of the Negro (St. Petersburg: Helga M. Rogers, 1970), p. 9.
- ¹¹⁵ Bradford, pp. 131 and 161-162.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 130.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 162.
- ¹¹⁸ For competing views on the migration theory, see Christian C. Reindorf, *The History of Golf Coast and Ashantee* (Accra: Waterville Press, 1895), 21-22; J. B. Danquah, *Akim Abuakwa Handbook* (London: Foster Groom and Co., 1928), p. 17; T. A. Osa, et. al., *A Short History of West Africa* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1973, p. 113; A Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1975), p. 5.
- ¹¹⁹ This information came from the presentations made by the students in my World Religions class in South Africa in the mid-1990s
- ¹²⁰ This information came from the presentations made by the students in my World Religions class in South Africa in the mid-1990s
- ¹²¹ This information came from the presentations made by the students in my World Religions class in South Africa in the mid-1990s.
- ¹²² Hayward, *African Independent Church Movements*, p. 8.
- ¹²³ Ibid.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 7-8.
- ¹²⁶ Isichei, p. 253.
- ¹²⁷ J. J. Nortey, "Independent African Churches: Are They Genuinely Christian?" *Spectrum*, Vol. 20: Num 2 pp. 29-37.
- ¹²⁸ "In Times Like These: A Conversation with the President ... on Africa," *The Adventist Review* (March 21, 2002), p. 13.
- ¹²⁹ ReligionToday.com (Feb 17, 1999).
- ¹³⁰ Isichei, p. 1.
- ¹³¹ "The Explosion of Christianity in Africa: An Unprecedented Spread of the Faith," Christian History Institute. www.gospelcom.net/chi/GLIMSEF/Glimpses/glimps151.shtml
- ¹³² Bradford, 164 and Isichei, 286-287.
- ¹³³ Isichei, 284-85.
- ¹³⁴ Bradford, 164-165.
- ¹³⁵ Bradford, 161 and Isichsi, 256; cf. Sundkler & Steed, 816.
- ¹³⁶ Bradford, 161; Isichsi, 255-256, and Sundkler & Steed, 814-816.

¹³⁷ Bradford, 167.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Bradford, 175-177 and Isichei, 199-201.

The Search for African Roots and the Biblical Sabbath

¹⁴⁰ Joseph E. Harris, *African American Reactions to the Italian Ethiopian War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

¹⁴¹ Prince Hall, "A Charge Delivered to the Brethren of the African Lodge," *Early Negro Writing, 1760-1830*, edited by Dorothy Porter (Boston: Beacon Press 1971) pp. 63-68; J. A. Rogers repeats this argument in *The World's Great Men of Color, Vol. II* (New York, Helga M. Rogers, 1947) pp. 3-5.

¹⁴² St. Clair Drake, *Black Folk Here and There, Volume I* (Los Angeles, UCLA Center for African American Studies, 1982)

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Report of the Commission on the Chicago Race Riot of 1920 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969).

¹⁴⁵ Frank M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209

¹⁴⁷ Frank M. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.)

¹⁴⁸ Tekletsadik Mekuria, *A History of Ethiopia from Lebna Dengal to Towodros* (Addis Ababa: Tinsayie, The Gubayie Press, 1953), p. 53, Quoted in Bekele Heye, "The Sabbath in Ethiopia," (Masters Thesis, Andrews University, 1968) p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ Bekele Heye, "The Sabbath in Africa: A Provocateur," p. 16

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Heye, p. 21

¹⁵¹ Heye, p. 27

¹⁵² Heye, p. 33

¹⁵³ Heye, p. 39

¹⁵⁴ Heye, p. 40

¹⁵⁵ Heye, p. 41

¹⁵⁶ Heye, p. 43

The "Great Controversy" and the Coming of Global Christianity

- ¹⁵⁷ Ernest R. Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968): 92-95.
- ¹⁵⁸ J.N. Andrews, "Thoughts on Revelation XIII and XIV," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 1851: 82-83.
- ¹⁵⁹ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Lamin Sanneh, *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993); *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996);
- ¹⁶⁰ Gary Land, *Teaching History: A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Andrews University Press, 2000): 43, see also 39-52, 85.
- ¹⁶¹ Jonathan Butler, "The World of E.G. White and the End of the World," *Spectrum* 10 (August 1979): 2-13.
- ¹⁶² Quoted in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 849.
- ¹⁶³ Andrew F. Walls, "Eusebius Tries Again: The Task of Reconceiving and Re-visioning the Study of Christian History," in Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002): 13.
- ¹⁶⁴ Gilbert Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W.W. Prescott* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992): 223-25; Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* 10 (March 1980): 27-41.
- ¹⁶⁵ Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement, Vol. 1: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 215-19, 250-51, 471-75.
- ¹⁶⁶ Bekele Heye, *The Sabbath in Ethiopia: An Exploration of Christian Roots* (Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry, 2003); Werner Vyhmeister, "The Sabbath in Egypt and Ethiopia," in Kenneth A. Strand, ed., *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982): 169-89.
- ¹⁶⁷ Jenkins, 74-75.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 254-55.

- ¹⁶⁹ White, *Education*, 238.
- ¹⁷⁰ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Changing Shape of Church History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), 153.
- ¹⁷¹ W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of Conflict From the Maccabees to Donatus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967) [get page #]
- ¹⁷² Irvin and Sunquist, 196; Walls, "Eusebius Tries Again," 9-10.
- ¹⁷³ Irvin and Sunquist, 282-88; 305-22; 459-61.
- ¹⁷⁴ Irvin and Sunquist, 214-19; 248-50
- ¹⁷⁵ Lamin Sanneh, "World Christianity and the New Historiography: History and Global Interconnections," in Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *Enlarging the Story*, 109-10.
- ¹⁷⁶ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 111-18.
- ¹⁷⁷ Sanneh, "World Christianity," 110.
- ¹⁷⁸ Sanneh, "World Christianity," 112.
- ¹⁷⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, *Introduction to Enlarging the Story*, xi-xvii.